

KILL ROCK STARS SHY FX TORTOISE JAMMER GHISLAIN POIRER A-TRAK TUJIKO NORIKO

XLR8R

95
MARCH
2006

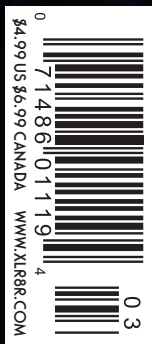
ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE



Scotch, Rocks

Glasgow's Mogwai tames the monstrous feedback of Mr. Beast.

The Best Reggae Record Stores
The Bizarre World of Bwana Spoons
Inside Sneaker World



WHERE YOU AT

IT AINT WHERE YOU FROM



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Julio is photographed here at our Mexico City apartment where, just five months earlier, the *Mexico City Monthly* was conceived. This free, bilingual publication by American Apparel and some of our friends is available at our stores worldwide (or visit vivamexicocity.com).

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Gavin Ivester from Puma throws caution to the wind. See more sneaker freaks on page 64. PHOTO: Ivo Gretneger



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ED'S RANT BLOOD, SWEAT, NO TEARS



Mogwai, photographed by Derrick Santini in London

So, so much text. I'm swimming in piles of it. Sentence fragments lay at the bottom of word documents like sad little crumbs; papers are strewn about, marked up with questions and highlighted footnotes. Yesterday I was careening so fast down the editing superhighway, light-speed ahead on rocket fuel (in the form of coffee laced with an espresso shot), that I actually slipped and gored myself with the tip of an ultra-fine point Sharpie, drawing blood.

Occupational hazards and battle wounds aside, I had to cut many wonderful quotes from this issue. Hours of interview tape became soundbites in the interest of making a magazine, not an encyclopedia. Luckily, we have an awesome website up at www.xlr8r.com where you can find plenty of outtakes and extras from all our issues, not to mention staff Top 10s, our podcast, breaking news, and a ridiculously dope collection of videos from the likes of The Juan Maclean, Dangerdoom, and Zion I.

As we dive headfirst into our 13th year, there's plenty of other new stuff to mention. You'll notice that our singles section has changed up dramatically. In the interest of giving you even more information, we've ditched straight-up 12" reviews for columns that will cover the whole scope of the scene—now we can not only highlight the best new vinyl, but also cover cultural movements and draw connections between strands of musical DNA. More than that, we can just bring you more music that doesn't fit neatly into established genres, from Bmore club and French electro-bass to oddball disco and noise-rock remixes.

Also, we've got a new addition to the editorial team, in the form of Canadian-bred Ken Taylor. Taylor's pushed product for Richie Hawtin's Plus 8 and Minus labels and covered culture for *Wired*, and now he joins us to whip the reviews and machines sections into place (as well as helping me whittle down them features). More than that, he is always up for a debate about the latest Goldfrapp record or the cultural relevance of The Prodigy, and knows how to not offend Scottish people (don't refer to them as "Scotch," for one). You can read more about his likes and dislikes in this month's contributors section, and catch him interviewing Irmin Schmidt from Can on the back page.

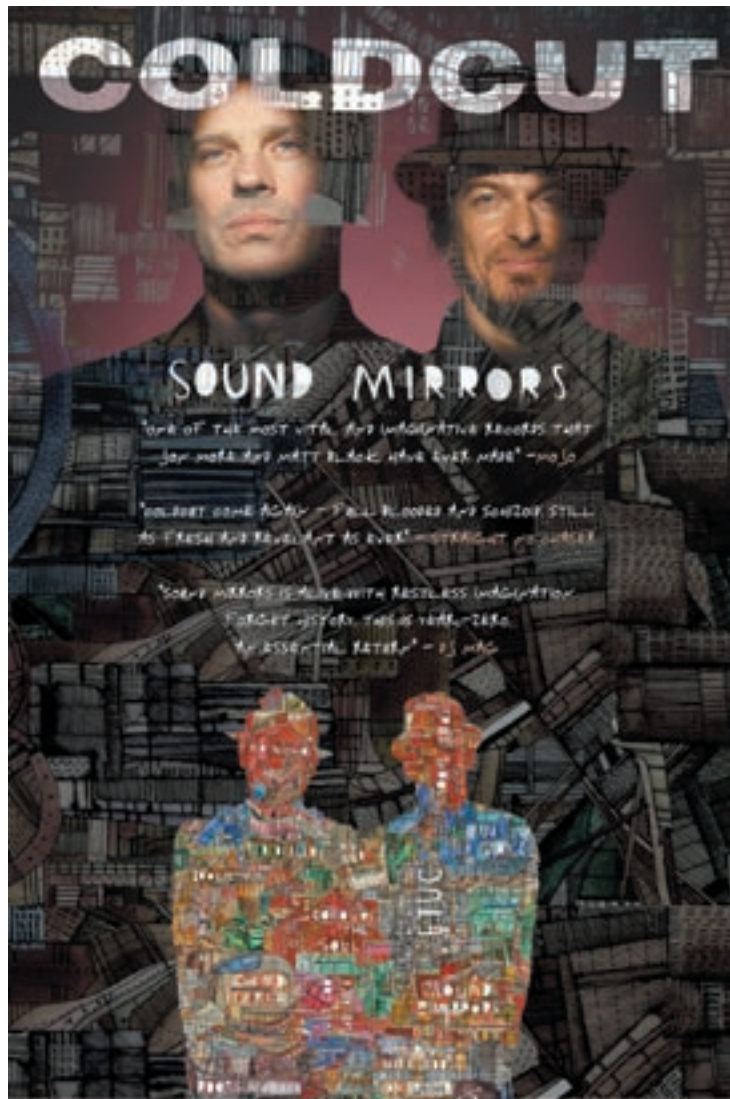
I hope you enjoy this issue. Maybe it's a little bit more rock than you're used to coming from us, but we're pretty confident that Mogwai and the Kill Rock Stars label have influenced quite a lot of you, whether you've got Pantytec pounding out of your speakers or yr rocking to RJD2. And if that doesn't twist your melon, then perhaps pieces on grime dude Jammer, Tortoise's collabo with Bonnie "Prince" Billy, and an in-depth look at the sneaker industry will. As for me? Well, I'm off to find a Band-Aid.

- Vivian Host, Editor



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Born in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, Derrick started taking pictures at the age of 13. First studying photography at Harrogate College, he later completed a degree in photography and communication at The London College of Printing. He quickly became renowned for his signature lighting and composition. Derrick's fashion work appears in *i-D*, *Flaunt*, and *Complex* and his advertising work includes campaigns for Levi's, Nike, and Reebok. He now lives between New York and London.

www.derricksantini.com



KEN TAYLOR

Hailing from the wilds of Windsor, Ontario, *XLR8R*'s new managing editor wrangled lawnmowers and press coverage for the Plus 8 and Minus labels before moving to San Francisco, a place that he claims to love like Timothy "Speed" Levitch does New York. Since arriving in SF in 2003, Ken has written for *New Musical Express*, *Wired*, MTV's *Urge*, and the *SF Bay Guardian*, where he penned the column Synthetic Pleasures. During quieter moments, he enjoys strange package design, word jumbles, and keeping up kentaylor.blogspot.com.



RACHEL SHIMP

When asked about her favorite kind of music, it's recently become easier for Florida native Rachel Shimp to say "drum & bass" rather than "a little of everything." The latter is still true, though, and she covers the gamut as a staff music writer for *Seattle Weekly*. When not listening to BBC 1Xtra, searching for the perfect club night, gazing at rocks off the Oregon coast, or eating *pad see ew*, Shimp maintains a blog of slow-cooking triumphs and disasters at lovmeycrook.blogspot.com.



UPNORTH

Erstwhile residents of the bitter north of Wisconsin, the team of Justin Kay and Steve Green did the killer illustration that adorns this month's *Shy FX* feature. Currently based in New York City, Upnorth blends clean graphics and type; their work is inspired by a rich history that includes skateboarding, Black Sabbath records, Norwegian metal-head Varg Vikernes, and the 1982 Milwaukee Brewers. The duo also publishes the zine *oneonenine*.

www.oneonenine.org

www.discover-upnorth.com





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to letters@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.

Living On Video

Hey XLR8R!

I can't seem to get any of the videos to load on your website. Help!

Jason, via the web

Jennifer responds:

Well, we're glad that you discovered our treasure trove of videos on xlr8r.com. Make sure that you've downloaded the latest version of whatever browser you use, and that you have the latest edition of Macromedia Flash installed (we recommend v.8). Naturally, a DSL (or faster) connection will yield the best results. Happy watching.

Computer Love

Hi there.

XLR8R downloads regularly contribute to the playlist for internet-radio station Brierly Hill 90210.

We put up a new show every week with each show being about an hour of just new, good music.

There's nearly always one or two tracks that came my way via XLR8R. The show's URL is included if

you want to check it out. Just wanted to say thanks.

On-the-air at www.live365.com/stations/323450

Cheers,

Jon (via the web)

Bryant responds:

Thanks for the props, Jon. We climb the highest of mountains to bring you five new tracks from your favorite (and soon to be favorite) artists every week. You can also subscribe to the XLR8R podcast—which downloads a sample mix of the week's tracks right to your computer—and then go to www.xlr8r.com to download the MP3s that really float your boat. In addition, every US subscriber to the print mag receives the INCITE CD, chock full of new tunes for you to go nuts over.

Corrections: In issue 94's Pop on Trial column, we mistakenly identified one of the band photos as being Austin's Spoon. Unfortunately, we have no idea who is actually in the photo, but we're 100% certain that it's not Spoon. Do you know who it is? Tell us at letters@xlr8r.com.

XLR8R'S "SPRING FORWARD" CONTEST

Get yourself into kicks from JB Classics and a CD/DVD set from Kill Rock Stars.

Ah, the spring... you can just smell it, can't ya? Trees in bloom, blue skies, and allergies just get our juices flowing for events like Miami's Winter Music Conference and Austin's South by Southwest festival. What can we say? The body gets out of its old lethargic habits and readies itself to kick-start the new year. We just want to help you do it in style, and we're going to suit you up for that annual renaissance with a hot new pair of **JB Classics** sneakers and a couple of **Kill Rock Stars'** latest releases. Jason Bass has been crafting JB Classics out of his San Francisco studio since 2002, and we've gotta say that they're some of the hottest shoes around. Featured in the lauded Sneaker Pimps shows (and just about every sneaker mag or site you can think of), Bass doesn't just freak 'em, he designs and constructs the shoes from top to bottom. Olympia label Kill Rock Stars pretty much epitomizes the DIY ideals that fuel companies like JB Classics. For years, Slim Moon and company have been dedicated to the indie spirit, putting out amazing records and changing the way we think about music, art, business, and life in general. You'll get a glimpse of what makes them so great with a copy of their **Starter Set** DVD and the latest CD from **The Gossip** entitled **Standing in the Way of Control**.

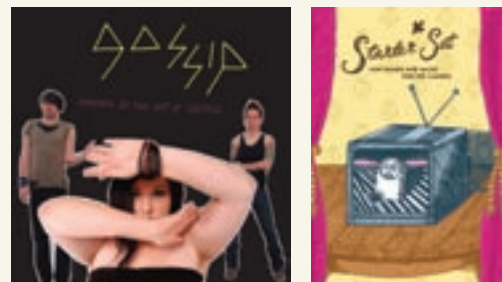
To win, answer these questions:

1. Tell us how you plan to spring forward this year.
2. How many times does the phrase "Delta 5" appear in this issue (including this time right here)?

One Grand Prize winner will receive: a pair of JB Classics in their size, a copy of the **Starter Set** DVD, and The Gossip's **Standing in the Way of Control** CD.

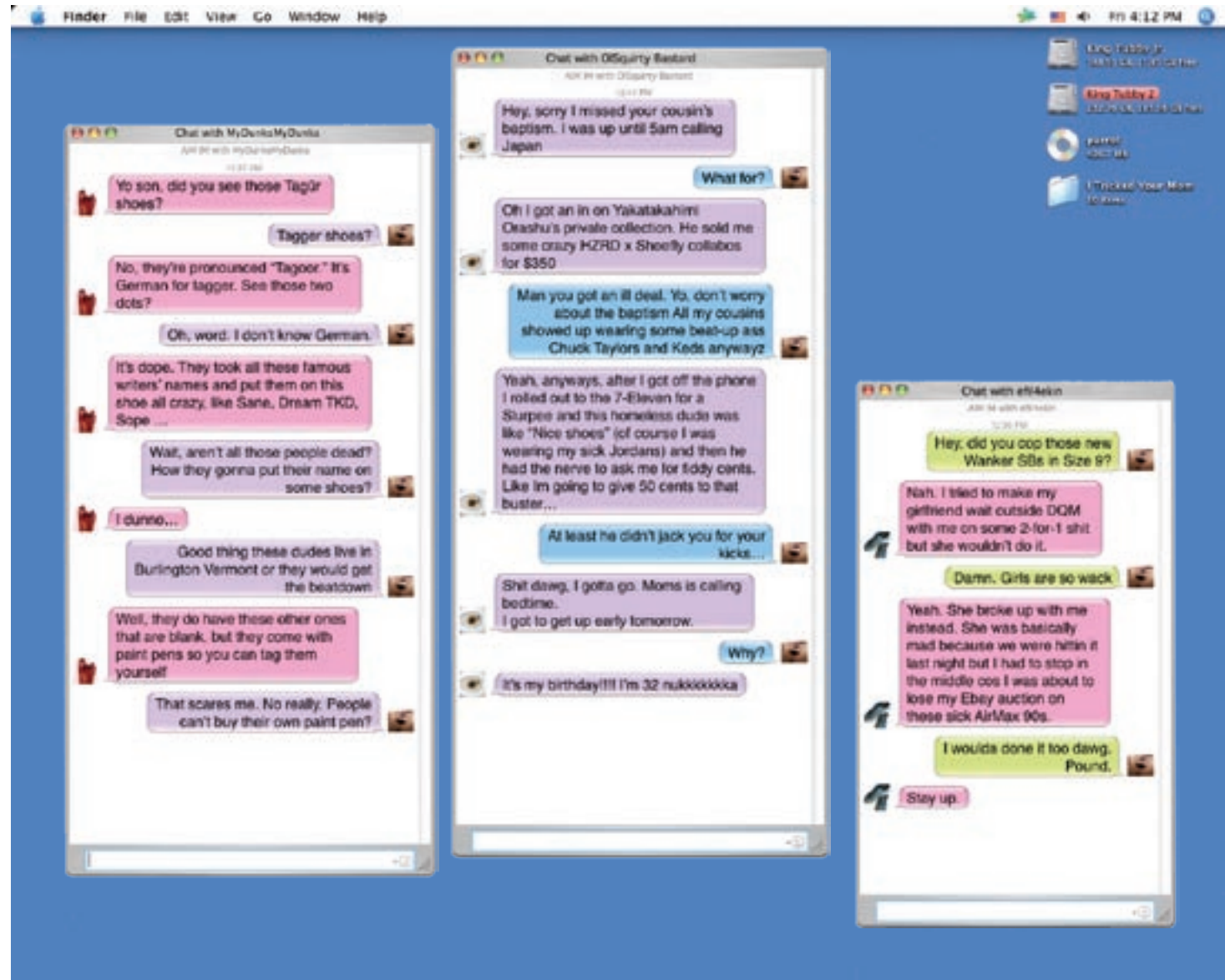
Four Runners Up will receive: a **Starter Set** DVD and The Gossip's **Standing in the Way of Control** CD.

Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Entries must be received by April 17, 2006. Send your answers to XLR8R's Spring Forward Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "Spring Forward Contest" in the subject line. www.suite2206.com, www.killrockstars.com



BJ "BITTER" BASTARD: SNEAK ATTACK

BJ "Bitter" Bastard recently let a haXor friend use his computer to ruin the mainframe at his ex-girlfriend's workplace. No biggie. But when BJ went to use it again, suddenly all these strange Instant Messages were popping up all over the place. BJ realized the computer was trapped in an alternate universe of sneaker fiend-dom. Fulfill your voyeuristic tendencies as you hone in on the top secret AIM chats of CrazyIllStyles, one of the dopest trainer collectors of the whole internet (in his own mind).



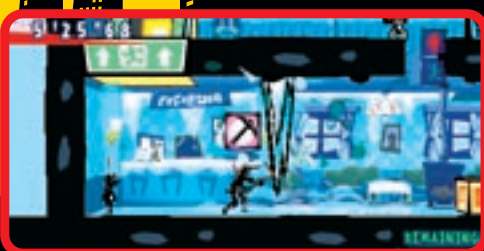
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SUBLIGHT RECORDS

TWISTED FAIRY TALES FROM WINNIPEG'S DARKEST RECORD LABEL.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD ILLUSTRATION: SANDRINE PAGNOUX

Aaron Rintoul has a tip if you want to visit Winnipeg. He recalls an incident where a man convicted of robbing a Pizza Hut in Arkansas was legally forbidden from entering Canada. No red tape could stop true love, and so he underwent a 100-hour trek on foot from North Dakota to Winnipeg to see his internet girlfriend. Eventually, he was found wandering a golf course with hypothermia, and had to have all of his fingers and some of his toes amputated. The moral? "If you plan to visit in February, pack something warm."

Rintoul's fondness for the abnormal is reflected in the music on his Sublight imprint. Within two years, his label has gone from spewing out splattered beats fresh from bedrooms where the sun never shines to becoming one of Canada's prime breakcore outposts. In winter 2005, Method of Defiance, led by maverick NYC producer/bassist Bill Laswell, released its debut album on Sublight; luminaries including Richard Devine, Jason Forrest, Fanny, Venetian Snares, Hecate, and Datach'i are also on board.

At Sublight, a dark, introverted sensibility prevails. "Many of the records explore subjects that don't fit into the normality of society—things that are dark or perverse and also within themes that look at the world with wonder and see beauty despite the negative," Rintoul explains. He began the label after watching Venetian Snares and Fanny perform in Winnipeg's unheated clubs. "It sounded like nothing I had ever heard before," he recalls. "[It was] more inspired by punk than by dance music and it really represented what growing up in Winnipeg can be like when you're young."

Aaron "Venetian Snares" Funk was perhaps the first artist to scream Sublight's name loud and clear to an unsuspecting public. The inner cover of his *Horse and Goat* EP was a painting of a Lolita surrounded by toys and lollipops that only Dr. Freud would love. Painter Trevor Brown, best known for his portraits of bruised Japanese schoolgirls, was responsible; he also inspired the record's chromosome-damaged ruckus. "I did have a little trouble getting it printed," Rintoul remembers. "Several manufacturers wanted nothing to do with it but I was determined to get it out there."

And then there's Funk's gabber-drummed revolt against his hometown, *Winnipeg is a Frozen Shithole*. One track samples a newscaster announcing that a Winnipeg wrestling coach was accused of sexually assaulting one of his students. The reporter encountered the record and called Rintoul.

"I thought for sure I was about to be sued," he recounts. "But then he proceeded to tell me he had been playing the CD in the lunchroom at work all day and just wanted to say he really liked the album."

Method of Defiance's *The Only Way To Go Is Down*, Hecate's *Brew Hideous*, and the *Eyelicker* compilation are out now on Sublight. www.sublightrecords.com



CHASE SCENE

Jörg Haas picks Beinghunted's favorite products for spring 2006.

If you get off on the latest Nike collabo or Japanese t-shirt craze, then you've probably already got Beinghunted bookmarked (not that you'll admit to it). Since October 2001, the website has been at the bleeding edge where sneaker freaks, high-end design folk, and gallery-opening fiends meet. "Beinghunted was, and still is, a way for me to communicate," says 32-year-old Berliner Jörg Haas, the man behind the fury. We tracked him down procuring items for his online store, The Glade, and asked him what he's most excited about this month. *Vivian Host*
www.beinghunted.com, www.the-glade.com

New Balance 575

Gearing up for an outdoors (ad)venture today requires an almost scientific knowledge of the expected weather, and you have to choose the right fabrics. Gore-Tex? Schoeller? Epic? Windproof, water-resistant, repellent? For New Balance's new Trail 575 model, we (Solebox and Beinghunted) only used traditional outdoors materials such as linen, leather, sheepskin, and cotton. People back in the days managed, too, you know.

Chocolate

Chocolate has never been unpopular, but a recent trip to Barcelona opened my eyes to a massive new cult forming around the stuff. Previously, buying chocolate entailed setting foot in a pseudo-luxurious, kitsched-out salon. New chocolate outlets like Cacao Sampaka remind us more of modern boutiques for design objects...in a friendly way, that is. Spain is already under siege and it's just a matter of time until this "new wave of chocolate" finds its way to us.

Stüssy MA-1 Jacket

Even though this jacket was made for Stüssy's XXV anniversary last year, it is still (and always will be) one of my favorite items. Stüssy is the brand that started it all, and the patches on the jacket represent the people who helped (trans)form this culture. Plus, I just like the jacket itself—the tonal design of the outer and inner, the white shoulder insets and accents, the slightly modified shape. A true Stüssy classic!

Visvim Hypatex 20

While Visvim is known for their mocasin, they make so many equally well-designed, functional, and comfortable things. Case in point: the Hypatex 20 Rucksack. For summer '06, a quilted version will return, although the elkskin version seems more practical—the dark color and durable material mean you can put it down on the ground without worrying about getting it dirty.

Wilfrid Wood Sculptures

There is a new disease spreading; let's call it "taste assimilation disorder." Everyone seems to like the same brands. There are the same sneakers everywhere, the same toys, the same everything. A few individuals are still pushing through the mediocrity. Wilfrid Wood is one of them, challenging us with his figurines and small sculptures. It is apparent that he loves what he does, he loves his creatures, and he probably doesn't care whether we do or not. Well, we do!

Beinghunted's top picks (clockwise from far left): Wilfrid Wood sculpture; Stüssy MA-1 jacket; Visvim Hypatex 20 backpack; New Balance 575 sneaker.



WHISPER TO A SCREAM

String quartet Amina soundtracks a new film about Iceland.

Amina has already discretely seduced their way into hearts and record collections via collaborations with Efterklang and The Album Leaf, and, most famously, as the string section for Sigur Rós. Now the Icelandic quartet provides one of the many highlights of *Screaming Masterpiece*—a documentary/soundtrack surveying the contemporary Icelandic music scene that finds rapture in the sounds of Múm, Slowblow, Björk, and Jóhann Jóhannsson, as well as these four women from the Tónlistarskólin í Reykjavík [the Reykjavik music school]. It would be easy to attribute the sheer prettiness of the group's own *AnimaminA* EP to the geological features of their homeland, but María Huld Markan, Hildur Ársúlsdóttir, Edda Rún Ólafsdóttir, and Sólrún Sumarliadóttir remain ambivalent about such a suggestion. "You're bound to be influenced by your surroundings no matter where you are," they say via a collective email. "What you eat, what you read, what you listen to—[all of] it will have an impact on you as a person. But when we're making music, we're not thinking about it." Rather, they attribute their emotive music to the influence of each other. "We talk a lot when we're composing," admits Amina, "And tend to keep our noses in each other's business." *David Hemingway*
Screaming Masterpiece is scheduled for release on DVD this month via Soda Pictures (www.sodapictures.com). *Original Music from the Film Screaming Masterpiece* will be released on Smekkleysa/One Little Indian. *AnimaminA* is out now on The Worker's Institute. www.workersinstitute.com, www.aminamusik.com, www.screamingmasterpiece.com

ANIMAL HOUSE

A new book by poster artist Jay Ryan plumbs the politics of cute.

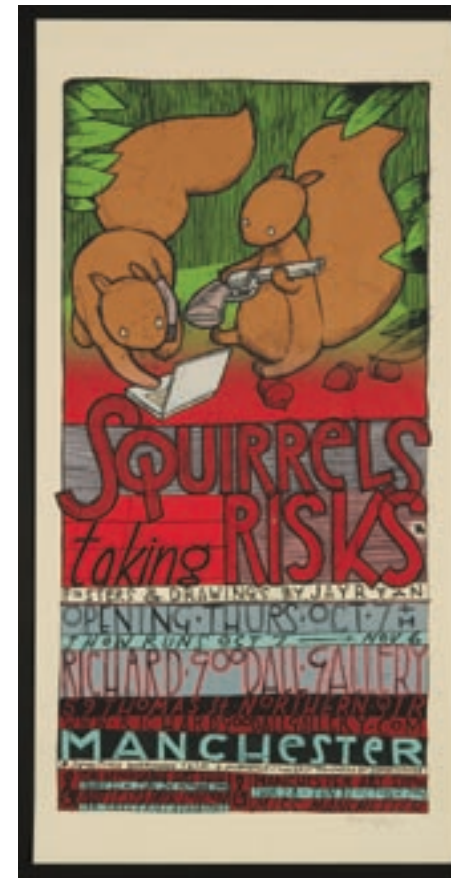
In the introduction to Chicago designer Jay Ryan's *100 Posters, 134 Squirrels: A Decade of Hot Dogs, Large Mammals and Independent Rock* (Punk Planet/Akashic; softcover, \$21), professor Debra Parr calls Ryan's illustrations "cute." "Cuteness is dumb and cheap," retorts rock figurehead Steve Albini. What gives?

100 Posters, 134 Squirrels

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100 Posters '96-page gallery also includes an intro from poster pioneer Art Chantry, who encouraged Ryan to develop his hand-drawn lettering. "We're drowned in perfect, slick design," says Ryan. "Seeing the hand of the person in a piece—whether through thumbprints, smudges, or a little misregistration—[is something] people identify with." *Rachel Shimp*
www.akashicbooks.com, www.thebirdmachine.com



ANIMAL HOUSE

A new book by poster artist Jay Ryan plumbs the politics of cute.

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www.akashicbooks.com, www.thebirdmachine.com



GROWING

NEW YORK'S HARDEST WORKING DRONES DESTROY CONVENTION.

WORDS: FRED MIKETA PHOTO: NOEL VON HARMONSON

Close your eyes and imagine that you're in an igloo. You're all by yourself. It's pitch black. Then you start to hear the sounds in your mind, rekindling the sensations of love, life, death, and suffering. Open your eyes. You've just experienced the cerebral din of Kranky Records' ambient guitar drone masters, Growing.

Hailing from New York City—by way of Olympia, WA—guitarist Joe Denardo and bassist Kevin Doria take the sensations of human life and weave them into soundscapes of the most intricately primitive proportions. It's a bit unfair to categorize a duo as colorful as Growing as merely an instrumental indie rock project. Their sound consists of layer upon layer of subsonic heaviness, unresolved feedback, and gorgeous flutters of delay, consummating a style and vision all its own.

The duo began playing together in college, both intent on escaping the constrictions of their respective hardcore/punk backgrounds. "Growing was the first thing each of us took seriously in any way, so it was always just about making good sounds from the start," says Denardo. Serious is a gross understatement. Since Growing's formation in the fall of 2001, the duo has managed to release seven albums with re-releases of several of the band's limited cassette projects, a split remix EP, and a new full-length on the way; not to mention the duo's latest record, *The Soul of the Rainbow and the Harmony of Light*, which is a weighty homage to an 1893 essay by Bainbridge Bishop regarding the relationship between color and sound.

Growing has played everywhere, from all-ages hardcore shows to the highly regarded All Tomorrow's Parties festival in England. These experiences have exponentially evolved their creative process. With each release, the duo's ambitions transcend the conventions of an already revolutionary sound palate. "I like to concentrate on how the sounds are resolving themselves," Denardo muses. "And when things are good, everything is very even and I feel like I'm not at a shitty venue anymore."

www.growingsound.com, www.kranky.net

Growing: Joe Denardo (left) and Kevin Doria



STRUNG OUT

Eleven new items for design fiends.

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www.keepcompany.com



DAVE GHETTO

THE VOICE OF CAMDEN, NJ, REFUSES TO BE SILENCED.

WORDS: MAX HERMAN PHOTO: LEROY ROSARIO

While talkative MC Dave Ghetto claims to also be an able beatmaker, he bluntly states that he has a reason to rap. "I have to be heard verbally," says Ghetto, "cause I got a lot of shit to say."

That he does, especially when he speaks about his hometown of Camden, NJ. This town (seated across from Philly) is now, according to Morgan-Quitno Press' annual rankings, considered the most dangerous city in America. And Dave can't stay silent about this declaration. "They say Camden is the most dangerous city in the country—this shit is not *City of God*, though," he says. "Let's be honest. It's hard, but it ain't that hard. We got running water and lights. Although the cops is corrupt, we learn to maneuver."

Camden may not be as wild as the slums of Rio de Janeiro, but it shaped Dave Ghetto as a man and an MC. "It has taught me to make the best out of the worst," Dave says of his city.

Coming up with his Nuthouse crew in the late '90s, Dave worked hard at getting his name out and was able to release material on the premier independent labels of the time, like Fondle Em and Goodvibe. Yet Dave admits that he quickly got caught up in an elitist mentality. "You know how we get," he says. "If it ain't underground, it's garbage."

But when this perceptive MC looked around at his immediate environment and saw the people's

desire to hear thug-styled rap, it actually helped him expand his horizons...and his subject matter. "All these years I was busy tryin' to find that safe medium between me being a dickhead from time to time and being somebody who's about the culture of hip-hop," he says, illuminating the balance he's achieved between conscious rhyming and real life.

On his solo debut on Miami's Counterflow records, *LoveLife?*, Dave does talk shit about pseudo thugs and the like. But on songs like "Hey Young World Pt. 2" (featuring Phonte and Mystic) and "Spread The Light," he balances vivid ghetto narratives with an optimistic outlook. "That just all comes from being a father, me being older, me being able to see what I've seen over the years and knowing that the way that we do things in life are not necessarily the right way," Dave explains.

While *LoveLife?* is often a smooth, even-tempered album, don't expect Dave to come back with a similar sound next time around—the dude won't be pigeonholed. "I'm angry right now," says Dave. "I might do a Public Enemy album one time. You never know."

LoveLife? is out now on Counterflow. www.daveghetto.com

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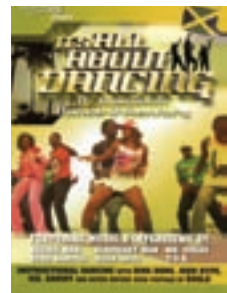
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It's All About Dancing: A Jamaican Dance-U-Mentary (Penalty Recordings, \$14.95) just might do for dancehall what *Rize* did for krumping. Over the 70-odd minutes that comprise the film, Jason "Jay Will" Williams—who has directed videos for Shaggy and T.O.K.—provides a comprehensive look at every element of dancehall culture. From Kingston slang finding its way around the world to guys outside the dancehall cooking up jerk chicken, Williams paints a sunlit portrait of Jamrock. But this is primarily a dance instruction video, so let's get down to it. Our teacher is renowned choreographer Ding-Dong. His directives aren't terribly accurate—he goes for more of a look-and-learn approach—and once you've got all the dances down, there's no indication of how to thread them all together. Still, after an hour of "parting the crowd" and "calling down the rain," *XLR8R*'s in-house dance squad is definitely looking better than when they started. *Ken Taylor PHOTOS Morgan Howland*
www.penaltyrecordings.com

LET'S BOUNCE

Jamaican choreographer Ding-Dong teaches you 2006's essential moves.

THE XLR8R CREW TAKES DIRECTION FROM DING-DONG



Dance: And One

Ding-Dong says: [It's so easy, he doesn't even address the viewer]

Difficulty: Low

The basics: Bounce on your left foot (and remember, these dances are almost all done on one-two-three beats). On the first bounce, raise your right foot behind your back and give it a slap with your right hand; repeat on the second bounce. On the third bounce, deliver a purposeful point forward with your right arm. And remember, do it with purpose!

Dance: Air Force One

Ding-Dong says: "If you can't do dis dance, you just can't dance. Leave dancin' alone."

Difficulty: Low

The basics: Bounce on your left foot and shoot your right foot over top of your left. On the second bounce, shoot your right foot out to the right side. On the third bounce, shoot the right foot out front as you lean into it and swing both hands forward as if lifting a box from the ground.
If it's done right: You'll look like you're shooting the duck at the roller rink.

Dance: Step Away

Ding-Dong says: "A very simple dance; a one-two-tree dance."

Difficulty: Medium

The basics: Standing on your right foot, shift your weight to the left foot while shooting left foot all the way out to the side. On second beat, follow over with your right leg and repeat action on the right side. On the third step (back to the left side), slide gracefully with exaggerated arm movements.

If it's done right: It looks like you're riding a ProFitter thigh-training exerciser, or doing the electric slide.

Dance: Santa Bounce

Ding-Dong says: "Da 'ardest, most complex dance I've ever created."

Difficulty: High

The basics: Bounce on your left foot. On the first bounce, twist the left knee outward while kicking the right toe behind left leg. On the second bounce, tap the right toe to the right side while twisting the left knee inward. On the third bounce, swing the right leg forward in an S-pattern.

If it's done right: It looks like you're trying to very rhythmically remove gum from the toe of your shoe.

On La Brisoa: dress by Adidas, shoes by Puma, belt by H&M, jewelry by Wet Seal; On Davis: pants and shoes by Adidas, top by Riddim Driven Apparel, hat by New Era for XLR8R; On Nene: skirt by Shaniece Walcott, top by Annabelle NYC, shoes by Asics. Thanks to Mehran Esmaili at Shoebiz SF. www.shoebizsf.com



RISE UP



RENO, NEVADA.
The temperature may get to 120 degrees, but Jeff Petit's pool has never seen water. Why swim when you can skate?

See the film at pony.com



ELIOT LIPP

A TACOMA BIRD TAKES FLIGHT TO CHICAGO, LA, AND BEYOND.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST

On the cover of *Tacoma Mockingbird*, a photo of Eliot Lipp is superimposed on a shot of an industrial Los Angeles skyline, his body bisected by a thick yellow line that busts a serious '80s graphic design move. While not my favorite album sleeve ever, it does a lot to suggest the influence that moving to LA has had on this 25-year-old producer's second album. G-funk keyboards mob all over this record, swinging through "Glasspipe," kicking back and squelching on "Check Weight." Meanwhile, the electro touches of "Last Night" and "Brand New" beg for an uprock or five, while the album's languid, liquid BPMs would be a great soundtrack to a smoke-filled lowrider slowly tippin' to the side.

In actuality, *Tacoma Mockingbird* equally reflects *everywhere* Lipp has lived (which is a lot of places). Songs "The People" and "Mashin on Em" channel the melancholy mood of his hometown: rainy, working-class Tacoma, Washington. "Vallejo" finds him under the influence of Bay Area gangster rap producer Khayree, whose underrated beats for Mac Mall and Ray Love informed Lipp's years in San Francisco. And the Dabrye-esque feel of the record—where instrumental hip-hop tempos rub up against plenty of techno touches—reflects a recent two-year stint in Chicago, one that had him listening to Pantytec, Luciano, and Cylob alongside Kool G Rap and Coltrane.

"I make different styles of music based on what environment I'm in," says Lipp, whose self-titled first album was released on Prefuse 73's Eastern Developments label. "My newer stuff has been getting less beat-oriented, but I've

also been making beats for MCs. For MCs, I'll try to make something really minimal so that it doesn't crowd in with the lyrics, but on *Tacoma Mockingbird*, I was trying to take up the space of where the MC would be with synth lines." Though each track contains five or six different synths, the majority of sounds on the record originated from Lipp's beloved Korg MS-20 and the Sequential Circuits Six-Trak, a 1984 analog relic. "All the sounds that I ever really need to use are in those two keyboards," he enthuses.

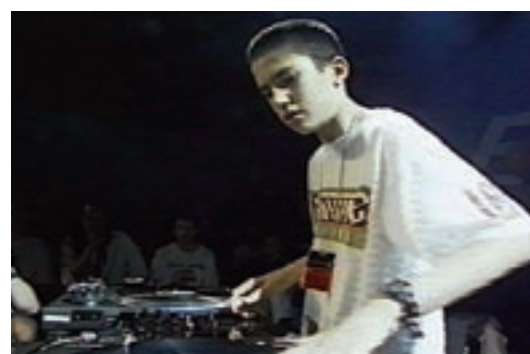
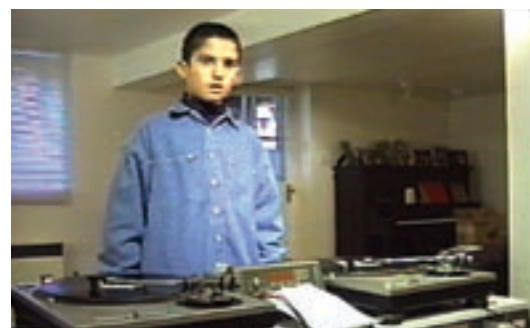
While most producers are busy trying to give their productions a more organic feel, Lipp is wisely ahead of the curve—he plans to take his next record in a more machine-driven direction. "I played a lot of *Tacoma Mockingbird* live," he explains. "I didn't really sequence anything. [For my next album], I want to get the human element a bit more out of it and make it more computer-y. I want to do a lot more sequencing to keep it fresh and keep a lot of thought put into it, rather than just going with the flow."

Tacoma Mockingbird is out now on Hefty. www.heftyrecords.com



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A TRIBE CALLED REQUEST

Turntable technician DJ A-Trak shares his personal bar mitzvah playlist.

In battle footage from his new DVD, *Sunglasses is a Must* (Audio Research, \$17.98), 15-year-old turntable prodigy A-Trak ends a routine by lip-synching the cocky line “What do you have that could possibly beat me?” It was as legitimate a challenge then—when he was winning the 1997 DMC Championships—as it is now for the Kanye West-tour-supporting 23-year-old DJ. The DVD—a compilation of quirky home videos, dizzying turntable routines, and A-Trak’s wry narration from his personal “study”—shows the Montreal native coming of age. But, true to his Jewish heritage, A-Trak (Alain Macklovitch) really became a man at his bar mitzvah (in fact, he used the money he received that day to buy his first pair of turntables). *XLR8R* asked him to compile the right tunes for making Jewish kids crank. *Patrick Sisson*
www.audioresearch.net, www.djatrak.com

Chi-Ali “Age Ain’t Nothin’ But a #”: “I think he was really young when he made this, like 13 years old. It’s all about young guys hooking up with young girls, so you should definitely play this at a bar mitzvah.”

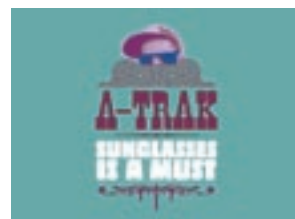
Kris Kross “Jump,” or something by Mobb Deep: “You have to keep playing the young artists. Also, Mobb Deep’s debut album was called *Juvenile Hell*.”

Non-Phixion “The C.I.A. is Trying to Kill Me”: “This group is full of hardcore, militant rappers that are Jewish. They would definitely offend an aunt or two since they make hardcore rap and don’t sing in Hebrew or anything. But maybe some activist uncle would like it.”

Puff Daddy “It’s All About the Benjamins (Original Bootleg Version)”: “One of the original lines in this song, which is censored in the official version, is ‘stack chips like Hebrews.’ It talks about Jews, so you have to put it in there.”

Black Market Militia “Paintbrush”: “This group includes Tragedy Khadafi, a Queensbridge rapper and black Israelite. I’m not sure what that means, but he talks about Solomon and drops this Hebrew prayer in another song.”

Anything by the Beastie Boys: “This just goes without saying. You must have them on the list.”



A-Trak (PHOTO Dan Monick) and stills from the DJ prodigy’s new DVD (from the top): an early start at percussion; with his first pair of turntables at 14 years old; performing his winning routine at the 1997 DMC Championships at age 15.



IDOL TRYOUTS

An NYC zine creates new cover stars.

They say you can learn a lot about people by meeting their friends, and *Me Magazine* (\$8, subscription \$25)—run by former *Index/Visionaire/V Magazine* creative Claudia Wu—is proof that “they” are not wrong. Each issue of this independent quarterly, which debuted in autumn of 2004, focuses on getting to know one special person by interviewing about 15 of their closest confidantes. It goes without saying that *Me* cover stars aren’t trashmen or toll-booth employees—past issues have focused on the likes of United Bamboo designer Miho Aoki, Rivington Arms gallery owners

Mirabelle Marden and Melissa Bent, and photographer/former Black Dice member Hisham Bharoocha. Naturally, these people have interesting and famous friends, among them artists assumevidastrofocus and Ashley Macomber, and musicians like Tyondai Braxton and Prefuse 73. As a result, *Me* can occasionally seem cliquish, but interesting interview questions and compelling photography elevate its voyeuristic pleasures far above those of a Lower East Side art opening. Wu is also keen to nip the heretofore New York-centric vibe of the publication in the bud by moving

the focus of future issues to LA and beyond. “I have a theory that, eventually, every person in New York will have been in the magazine at least once, if not more,” she explains via email. “I’m trying to branch out before that happens!” And, contrary to popular belief, *Me*’s cover stars aren’t culled from Wu’s inner circle. “I have a ‘no friends’ policy,” she says. “I take recommendations from people or try to reach out to [those] who I think are interesting.” *Tyra Bangs Me #7*, featuring artist Nate Lowman, is out this month. www.memagazine NYC.com



Barn by Martin Mazorra

STORM WARNING

Barnstormers’ new DVD induces a zen-like state.

Since 1999, artist David Ellis and a rotating cast of paintbrush-wielding troubadours have traveled to the tiny town of Cameron, NC, to paint massive, swirling murals on barns and other rural accoutrements. Their new DVD, *Barnstormers 360* (Barnstormers; \$20), unfortunately eschews footage of the community in favor of a 30-minute movie documenting their 2004 installation at the Southeast Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, NC. What the documentary lacks in narration and scope it makes up for in spirit. Time-lapse photography of the team dismantling a barn, reinstalling it in the gallery, and then painting it with a variety of organic, epic designs is fairly mesmerizing. Highlights include the manic calligraphy of Jose Parla, the bright colors and searing precision of large-scale work from Sasu and Kami, and the instrumental soundtrack (created by Barnstormers like Mike Houston and Martin Mazorra); the latter is a restless jam session that incorporates elements of noise rock, the psychedelic ‘70s, space hip-hop, and dive-bar country house band in its mix. *Barnstormers 360* may not be a total blockbuster, but now you have something to play in the background of your next hot tub party. *Tyra Bangs*
www.b-stormers.com



“Cravo é Canela” by Milton Nascimento

“All of us in Tortoise love Brazilian music and we’re big fans of Milton. He’s arguably the most famous Brazilian musician. He’s like Michael Jackson down there.” *Jeff Parker*

“I think Will just learned Portuguese phonetically for this track. I think he did a great job singing, though I don’t know Portuguese. Maybe people in Brazil and Portugal are going to hear it and get pissed and ban him from the country.” *John Herndon*

“Thunder Road” by Bruce Springsteen

“We made this one a slow jam by changing all the chords to minor chords and slowing down the tempo.” *Jeff Parker*

“It was chosen partly because the fellow that runs Overcoat Recordings, Howard Greynolds, loves The Boss. I think it’s great, and I don’t think that about a lot of stuff I’ve recorded. I still really love to listen to it.” *John Herndon*

“It’s Expected I’m Gone” by The Minutemen

“Doug McCombs (Tortoise’s bassist) should run the Minutemen fan club. He loves them like no one else I know. This cover is different than the original—a little slower and chunkier—but we were trying to stay in the rock spirit. Parker added this sort of Southern rock guitar lick at the end, which made all of us go nuts.” *John Herndon*

“That’s Pep!” by Devo

“This one was kind of difficult. I’m not sure we totally hit the mark. It’s really hard because they are one of my all-time favorite bands and that kind of makes it more difficult. I don’t think you can get much more perfect than Devo.” *John Herndon*

“Pancho” by Dan Williams

“Will wanted to do this one because he thought it was really, really hilarious. It’s got this kind of homoerotic undertone, just the whole thing with these two cowboys; it kind of shed a different light on the story of the *Cisco Kid*. As a tune, there’s not really much to it. It’s pretty straightforward and goofy.” *Jeff Parker*

Tortoise (Jeff Parker, Doug McCombs, John McEntire, John Herndon, Dan Bitney) and Bonnie “Prince” Billy (PHOTO Maya Hayuk)

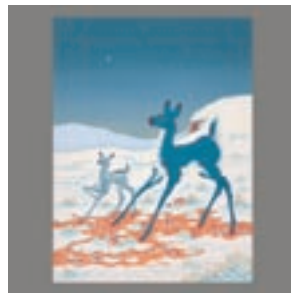
DEEP COVERS

Tortoise dissects cuts from *The Brave and the Bold*, their new record with Bonnie “Prince” Billy.

The premise behind *The Brave and the Bold*—putting post-rock innovators Tortoise in a studio with country-tinged singer Will Oldham (Bonnie “Prince” Billy, Palace Music)—sounds like an episode of an indie rock reality show. But after the assembled musicians finished the two-week-long recording sessions that produced the album, the combination turned out to be a genre-splicing success. “It was really natural,” said Tortoise guitarist Jeff Parker of the collaboration. “Will is something else. His stamina is crazy. That dude would sing all day.”

Parker and Tortoise drummer John Herndon recently told *XLR8R* about the process of selecting and reworking the record’s offbeat covers, which span legendary punk tracks, country ballads, and Brazilian grooves. *Patrick Sisson*
The Brave and the Bold is out now on Overcoat.

www.overcoatrecordings.com, www.trts.com, www.palacerecords.com



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DOMINO

MURS & 9TH WONDER
Murray's Revenge
MURS has once again collaborated with North Carolina native 9th Wonder (Lata Brother) to bring us Murray's Revenge, the follow up to their critically acclaimed underground hip hop masterpiece, *2:18 The 9th Address*.

RECORD COLLECTION

MONO
You Are There
Their darkest, heaviest and most cinematic album yet. ON TOUR THIS SUMMER WITH PELICAN. "An awesome musical experience as you could ever hope for." - *Copper Press*

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A seismic new chapter in UK Grime. Reaching into a deeper pool of ferociously original producers and expert new MCs emphasizing flow and wordplay. "This compilation proves that grime has an energy that is impossible to ignore." - *Daily Telegraph*

VICE RECORDINGS

FRANCK ROGER
We Walk To Dance
"If you've been keeping up with the incredible deep house music coming out of France, the name Franck Roger should be no mystery to you. With the April 4th release of his debut studio album, *We Walk To Dance*, on Seasons Recordings, Franck's depth and versatility show through in joffrey form." - *Dean DeGrua, RPM Magazine*

SEASONS RECORDINGS

CLOGS
Lantern
This quartet of Australian and American musicians features two members of The National. They make graceful and haunting instrumental sounds a la recent tour mates The Books and Belle & Sebastian.

BRASSLAND

SECRET MOMMY
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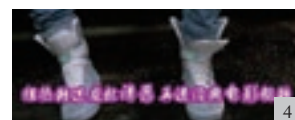
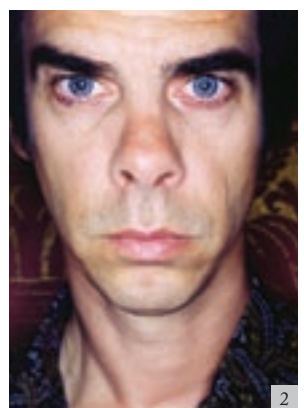
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SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world

MTV Films recently acquired the movie rights to **Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure**, a graffiti videogame created by clothing entrepreneur **Marc Ecko**. Chicago's deep house and broken beat label **Deeper Soul**, helmed by erstwhile *XLR8R* scribe Josh Ferguson, has a new internet radio show. Get an earful at www.samurai.fm/deepersoul and check out other Samurai shows from **Damian Lazarus**, **Nordic Trax**, and **Soma Records**. **Vice Records** recently debuted a new mp3 blog at www.vice-recordings.com. **McSweeney's** literary journal launched a DVD magazine called **Wholphin**; their second issue, out this month, could include "short films by **The Daily Show** writers, footage of remote-controlled headless zombie flies, and something special from Tajikistan." This spring, **Vans** will be releasing limited-edition collaborations with sneaker boutiques Dave's Quality Meats (NYC), Kicks (Hawaii), and Huf (SF); later in the year, the skate lifestyle giant will unleash themed shoes from punk bands Descendents and Circle Jerks. As of December 30—just in time for New Year's Eve and a day after turning 32—Texas rapper **Pimp C** of **UGK** was released from prison. UK drum & bass label **Inperspective** recently debuted a new label, INP. Norwegian disco wonder twins **Lindstrøm & Prins Thomas** have new remixes of **Roxy Music**, **Franz Ferdinand**, and **Allez Allez** out. On January 26, San Diego's Casbah venue hosted the fifth installment of How To Destroy the Universe, an extreme art and performance festival; this year's line-up featured **Einstürzende Neubauten** founder Blixa Bargeld and Swans vocalist Jarboe. This year marks **Etnies'** 20th anniversary; the legendary skate company will celebrate with a special footwear collection, the re-release of the Rap-High and Lo-cut One shoes, and events in NYC, Paris, and Lake Forest, CA. May



finds the release of **The Proposition**, a film set in the Australian outback of the 1880s, written and soundtracked by **Nick Cave**. Get your claws out! Releases from **Paw Tracks** this month include a 7-inch from new signing **First Nation** and an album from **Terrestrial Tones** (including Animal Collective's Dave Portner and Black Dice's Eric Copeland). In January, Nielsen Soundscan reported that, in 2005, music sales hit an eight-year low, though digital sales were up. In April, **Amp Fiddler** will release an EP teaser for his highly anticipated second album, due to drop later in 2006. The UK's Southport Weekender will happen May 5-7 this year, with headliners including **Kerri Chandler**, **Kenny Dope**, **LTJ Bukem**, **IG Culture**, and **Norman Jay**. Sneaker fiend Al Cabino has launched a petition to persuade Nike to issue **Marty McFly's** grey moon boots from **Back to the Future II** for public consumption. Sign it at operationmcfly.blogspot.com. Bay Area rapper **E-40** has his own brand of liquor coming out soon called Cloud 9; he also has plans to open 10 Fat Burger restaurants around the Bay Area. Techno don **Richie Hawtin** collaborated with Italian choreographer Enzo Cosimi on a piece for the opening ceremony of the XXth Olympic Winter Games, which were held February 10 in Torino, Italy. Nu-jazz and soulful house label **Chillifunk** celebrates a 10th birthday this year with the release of a compilation mixed by founders **Lofty** and **Bob Jones**, and a world tour. Celebrate with them at www.chillifunk.com. The folks at Philly's **Poison Control** have just come out with a new quarterly zine called **Dungeon**, and are throwing an ongoing event series called Rebel Alliance, celebrating outsider art, renegade journalism, and experimental music. Learn more at www.poison-control.com.

1. Richie Hawtin; 2. Nick Cave; 3. *Dungeon* magazine cover; 4. Marty McFly's moon boots; 5. *Wholphin* DVD magazine.



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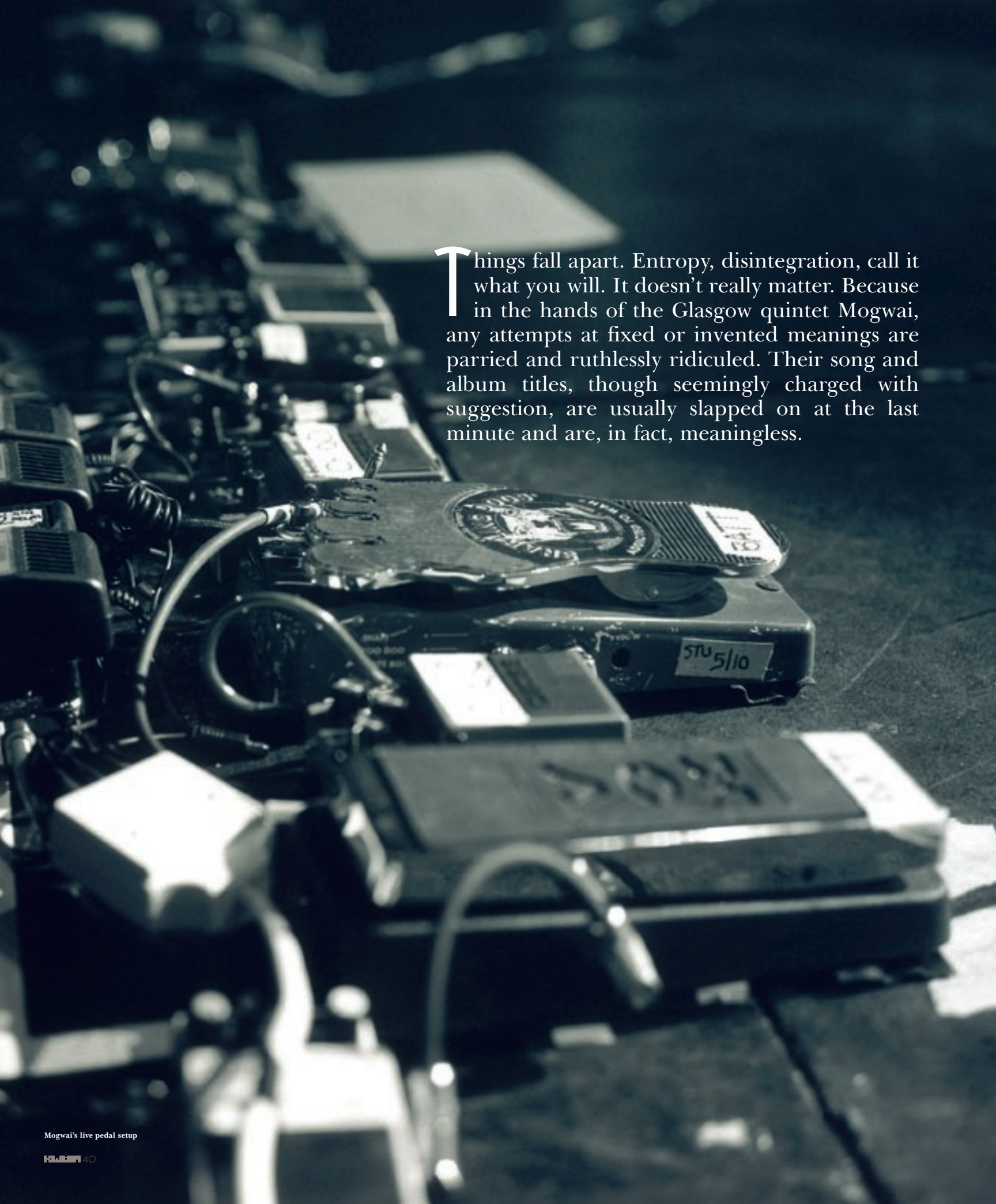
LOUDER THAN BOYS

Sonic explorers Mogwai defy the odds and deliver contradictions, all with a smartass grin.

WORDS: SCOTT THILL PHOTOS: DERRICK SANTINI
TYPE DESIGN: UPNORTH



Mogwai: John Cummings, Martin Bulloch, Barry Burns, Stuart Braithwaite, Dominic Aitchison



Things fall apart. Entropy, disintegration, call it what you will. It doesn't really matter. Because in the hands of the Glasgow quintet Mogwai, any attempts at fixed or invented meanings are parried and ruthlessly ridiculed. Their song and album titles, though seemingly charged with suggestion, are usually slapped on at the last minute and are, in fact, meaningless.

“THIS IS THE DARK WORLD WE INHABIT.”
— STUART BRAITHWAITE

It is indeed futile to categorize Mogwai's work in the conventional sense, as they've been all over the sonic map since *Young Team* and *Ten Rapid* dropped like a nuclear strike in 1997. Their stripped-down 1999 effort, *Come On Die Young*, diffused distortion's pyrotechnics, exhibiting the band's skill at dissonant melody, especially on tracks like “Cody.” (An acronym for the album-at-large or a somber love song? You decide.) 2001's *Rock Action* album was their most accessible, and while just as sedate (if not more so) as *Come On Die Young*, it purposefully expanded upon the use of vocals, putting much distance between Mogwai and their thunderous guitar assaults of the past. By the time their last record, *Happy Songs for Happy People* (2003), hit the shelves, Mogwai had merged its schizophrenic sonic identities into one representative palette: those searching for *Young Team* rockers found solace in epics like “Ratts of the Capital” and “Killing All the Flies,” while those favoring more conventional explorations latched onto favorites like “Hunted By a Freak.”

Still, Mogwai remains the most elusive of signifiers. A mostly instrumental quintet that sometimes makes way for subdued vocals. A could-give-a-shit Glaswegian collective, shot through with relentless humor but still inspiring the most intellectually serious interpretations. Cosmic goofs with one finger on the panic button, awash in guitars, pedals, pianos, horns, woodwinds, samplers, laptops, and whatever else they can find and fuck around with.

Tortured terminology falls off of them like dead skin. Post-rock? So 20th century. Shoegaze? Died with their heroes My Bloody Valentine, whose legendary 1991 effort *Loveless* helped build the sonic foundation upon which Mogwai triumphantly stands.

BLOODY COMPARISONS

Speaking of My Bloody Valentine, Mogwai's band manager Alan McGee—who bankrolled *Loveless* before the band's lead architect, Kevin Shields, almost bankrupted the Creation label—was rumored to be on the internet arguing that Mogwai's new album, *Mr. Beast*, is superior to MBV's masterwork. You could hear the band cringe from miles away, as they did when I brought the subject up during a

sit-down lunch of mince pies and more at London's forward-looking Institute for the Contemporary Arts.

“I know that Alan is just trying to drum up some attention,” explains Stuart Braithwaite, the band's *de facto* leader and most trenchant jester. “He's all about making grand statements. He's a great guy and very funny. But I was embarrassed by it. To be honest, when people compare us to My Bloody Valentine, I think it's because they were the last band outside of the mainstream to actually infiltrate the mainstream.”

Nonetheless, the comparisons are resilient enough to survive, to Mogwai's endless frustration. After all, Braithwaite is friends with Shields; plus, the shoegaze wizard decided to drop by and catch the third installment of Mogwai's five-day warm-up at the ICA. Add that to the fact that both bands have shared the services of McGee, and you've got one persistent storyline that will most likely never die, especially if the rumored reunion of My Bloody Valentine comes to pass and Mogwai signs on to open for them.

TO ROCK OR NOT TO ROCK

If you're looking for more contradictions, witness Mogwai's first night warming up chilly London. There the shirts-and-jeans-clad collective stood, ready to pulverize eardrums like so much porous bone. When Braithwaite launched into the opening progression for “Glasgow Mega-Snake,” one of *Mr. Beast*'s phenomenal guitar Godzillas, the crowd barely blinked an eye, even though the noise was deafening, the riffage palpable and visceral, and the grooves heavier than kryptonite. When asked why that was, a few shaggy concertgoers told me that they preferred to give the band respect rather than disrupt the proceedings with untoward moshing.

I ask the band about it the next day, before soundcheck for their second consecutive show.

“Yeah, they were pretty subdued,” admits keyboard player Barry Burns. “And I don't know why that is. It's a wee bit weird. But I think they all enjoyed it.”

“To be honest,” adds Braithwaite (who likes to say that often), “I think it's because these are small shows, and the crowd is made up of hardcore fans of the band. So they were probably just being a bit too reverential, you know?”

“I don't think there was a full bar,” cracks guitarist John Cummings. “If there was, it probably would've been a bit more rowdy.”

a medieval society. It's really scary. Trying to tell kids in their schools that the dinosaurs didn't exist, that the world was made in seven days and all that. And the government is encouraging it. You have to start wondering when they're going to burn witches."

BEAST MASTERS

Although America and Americans might rightly give Mogwai fits of conscience, England treats the band like stone cold rock royalty. Indeed, by the night of their second performance at the ICA, London had caught Mogwai's fever, figuratively speaking. There were fans adorning the ICA entrance, begging for extra tickets. The hubbub was prodigious and immediate, and Mogwai rode it hard, fronting an almost entirely different setlist, save for the new tracks from *Mr. Beast* still being hammering into live-show shape. Running through a healthy dose of fan favorites like "Summer," "Tracy," "2 Rights Make One Wrong," and *Young Team's* popular (if ironically titled) 16-minute epic "Mogwai Fear Satan," they could do no wrong. Even when Burns screwed up the lyrics to *Mr. Beast's* melodic, distortion-drenched "Travel is Dangerous," uttering "Blah blah blah" instead of the verse, Braithwaite merely shrugged and played on as if nothing ever happened.

"If I had to choose between never having sex again and never hearing Mogwai again," one fan told his friend after the strains of *Mr. Beast's* sludge metal finale "We're No Here" died away, "I'd take Mogwai."

That kind of devotion has been part and parcel of Mogwai's loyalist base, but trying to get the band to approach the irreconcilable differences between their somber rock and their penchant for making fun of everything is rewarded with nothing but jokes.

"We *do* care about the music, but that's probably the only thing we care about," Burns explains.

"Well, that and sports," adds Braithwaite. "Especially Martin, when his team loses."

"Last time his team lost, he didn't talk for two days," recalls Burns.

"For the first couple of years, people didn't have a clue," bassist Dominic Atchinson explains about the media's consensual jump to conclusions. "They thought we were a bunch of yobs."

"Actually, we're rather boisterous," Braithwaite says. "Is that an American word? Boisterous? There are just a lot of things that go into being a band, including misconceptions. I mean, how can you take standing in a row with four guys that you make music with while some guy takes a photo of you, saying 'Wicked!' or 'That's hot!' over and over again? It just doesn't make any sense."

Indeed, what really matters to Mogwai is simply getting on with their music. But, having survived their first decade together, the band grows subdued when asked to comment on their future. It's left to Stuart, as usual, to elaborate.

"I think we're all quite..." he begins, before deciding against speaking for the band. "Well, *I'm* certainly quite content making music, especially since people still want to hear it."

"We must be doing something right," Burns concludes, before falling back on Mogwai's trademark self-deprecating wit. "But I don't know what it is."

Mr. Beast is out March 7 on Matador Records. www.mogwai.co.uk, www.matadorrecords.com

"Maybe we should do some interpretive dancing," says Burns.

"I think it will take them a while to get used to all the new songs," counters Braithwaite. "At the moment, we're just setting the pace and trying not to fuck the songs up, so all that other stuff takes a back seat."

JOKE'S UP

By the second night, everything had changed. Mogwai chose to begin their set with a familiar favorite, "You Don't Know Jesus," and the audience instantly came alive at its first notes. By the time they got around to "Glasgow Mega-Snake," the pump had already been primed; for the entirety of the concert, the hoots, hollers, and applause rained down like the equipment malfunctions that continued to hamper the proceedings but did nothing to dampen the crowd's enthusiasm.

"This is what we go through all the time," Braithwaite explained to the smoke-filled space, shaking his head at the spotty PA system and crackling amps. "This is the dark world we inhabit."

After one song, something sounding not unlike a cherry bomb exploded repeatedly through the monitors, causing Cummings to duck in response. "We're being attacked!" screamed Braithwaite into the mic. "Al Qaeda!"

The crowd cackled with laughter. As much as Braithwaite jokes, he's serious about the fearmongering and war that America's government has inflicted on the rest of the world, as is the rest of the band. When asked, on Mogwai's official website, if the Glasgow goofballs would be visiting the United States again, Burns replied, "Unfortunately, because the country voted for Bush, we're not coming back for four years. It would be the same if we had to play in Germany during 1939-45." In pure Mogwai fashion, he threw everything into reverse one sentence later. "Now, I should say that I'm joking," he wrote.

Of course, the band is too big now to ignore America, even if they wanted to (which they don't). But Braithwaite is unequivocal about his distaste for the Bush administration and the country's disturbing rightward shift. Asked if the current geopolitical situation scares him, he turns dead serious—for once.

"Yes it does. It's almost become..." he trails off, before settling on his answer. "Well, it has become

SONIC ECHOES

Mogwai's major influences, sonic and otherwise.

MY BLOODY VALENTINE

The wall-of-guitar sound of *Loveless*—especially the surges and heaves of "Only Shallow," "Come in Alone," and "What You Want"—laid the foundation for much of Mogwai's work. Even Mogwai's vocals, especially on songs like *Come On Die Young's* "Cody" and "Take Me Somewhere Nice," evoke MBV guru Kevin Shields' subdued delivery on "When You Sleep." But it is the balls-to-the-wall axe riffage of MBV's "Feed Me With Your Kiss" and "Honey Power" that shine the brightest light on how Mogwai has expanded upon MBV's legacy.

SLINT

Slint set the stage for post-rock clusterfuck with *Tweez* and the universally acclaimed *Spiderland*, but their work is far too jagged and halting to drag comparisons out much further. However, there are times when *Come On Die Young* feels like a lost Slint recording, albeit one that finally got its shoelaces tied.

ERIK SATIE

Barry Burns is influenced by this iconoclastic French avant-gardist; both construct moving yet estranged piano compositions (see "Team Handed" from *Mr. Beast*). Like Mogwai, Satie was also one hilarious dude, crafting bizarrely titled compositions like "Dried Up Embryos" and "Genuinely Flabby Preludes (For a Dog)."

CINEMA

Mogwai has a particular love for William Friedkin's horror classic *The Exorcist*, along with Joe Dante's *Gremlins* (from which they derive their name). More than once their music has been likened to film soundtracks, and the band has recently begun scoring films.

THE STOOGES

Stuart Braithwaite named Mogwai's label after Stooges drummer Ron Asheton's "Rock Action" nickname. Classic tracks like "Down On the Street" and the nearly lost "Sick of You" have that same soft/loud dynamic that Mogwai later took to the limit with *Young Team's* "Like Herod" and "Mogwai Fear Satan," while The Stooges' penchant for mercilessly destroying eardrums inspired the band to push the noise envelope.



Fifteen years later, Olympia's pioneering Kill Rock Stars label still sounds like rebellion.
WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD PHOTOS (SLIM): MARCELLA VOLPINTESTA
TYPE DESIGN: UPNORTH



"THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW WHAT IS BEST FOR A BAND IS THE BAND THEMSELVES." -SLIM MOON

Kurt Cobain was late. It was Valentine's Day 1991, and he walked into Olympia, WA's North Shore Surf Club just as Bratmobile was exiting the stage. "I ran up to him and said, 'You missed us!'" recalls Bratmobile vocalist Allison Wolfe of the band's first ever performance. "[Kurt] was like, 'Sorry!' He seemed flustered."

One person who did catch Bratmobile was Slim Moon, a guy that Wolfe had been seeing at punk shows and parties around Olympia for years. Though Bratmobile was more of an idea than a band at that point, Moon wanted to include their song "Girl Germs" on a compilation named after his new label, Kill Rock Stars. The seed was planted.

That July, *Kill Rock Stars*—featuring Nirvana, Unwound, Courtney Love, and Bikini Kill (who also played the Surf Club show)—was released at Olympia's International Pop Underground Convention, where dozens of bands performed at what some argue was the last moment of innocence for '80s underground punk and indie rock. Nirvana's *Nevermind* was released a few weeks later; then came the mainstream media's microscopes: "Seattle grunge," and "riot grrrrl" profiled in *Seventeen*, the beginning of "alternative rock," and flannel on the runways. Steering clear of the hype and staying true to their roots, Kill Rock Stars prevailed—15 years later, they remain one of the US' most innovative indie labels, their music and aesthetic having inspired artists from Cobra Killer to Chicks on Speed.

"We kind of just kept on doing what we were doing," Moon explains, before sharing the principles that continue to define KRS. "I had a notion about music that means something. And I definitely had a philosophy that the people who know what is best for a band is the band themselves."

TWO LABELS, NO LABELS

Taking punk up on its dare to "do it yourself," Slim Moon officially registered Kill Rock Stars as a business in 1991. The name came from a line spontaneously written on one of his paintings; the inspiration was the Olympia music scene itself. "People [here] started bands just to have fun, or to play for their friends, not with intentions of fame," Moon says. "I like that purity of expression."

The initial KRS concept was a "wordcore" label, dedicated to spoken word 7"s by the likes of Jean Smith and Penny Arcade. In fact, one of Moon's early finds was a young Miranda July. Now an acclaimed indie filmmaker (*Me and You and Everyone We Know*), July says she still has a Patti Smith tape that Moon gave her a decade ago when she was a spoken word artist.

Kill Rock Stars quickly became more about music, with Moon unwittingly creating a focus on the Pacific Northwest in the same way that Dischord did for DC. Era-defining all-girl punk

“THEY PRESENT SOMETHING DANGEROUS IN A TIME WHEN PEOPLE WANT EASY LISTENING.” — CARRIE BROWNSTEIN, SLEATER-KINNEY



bands Bratmobile, Huggy Bear, and Bikini Kill kicked macho 'n' misogynistic rock in the eye with riot grrrl diatribes like Kathleen Hanna's notorious rant on Bikini Kill's "Suck My Left One." Joey Ramone dueted with '60s pop star Ronnie Spector. Volatile noise-rockers Unwound experimented with dub while gazing at meteor showers on *Repetition*, and DJ Spooky dissolved a Free Kitten song into an unexpected hiss of Chinatown steam and a hail of jungle beats.

In 1997, Moon pushed boundaries even further, creating sister label 5 Rue Christine—so titled after Lost Generation writer Gertrude Stein's Parisian address—to release music too abstract and experimental to fit on KRS. The label has found Sacramento's Hella confusing arenas full of System of a Down fans with a racket made from little more than a guitar and drum set, and Nintendo cover band The Advantage delivering guitar renditions of "Moon Level" from the videogame *DuckTails* and "Mine Shaft" from *Ninja Gaiden*.

KRS and 5RC both have catalogs so diverse that they give no idea of where they are going next. Sleater-Kinney guitarist Carrie Brownstein defines the label by its sheer fearlessness. "[They have a] desire to present something dangerous in a time when people want easy listening," she says.

"Kill Rock Stars does not have a sound," concurs Deerhoof drummer Greg Saunier. "It's very unclear what

it is [Slim's] looking for. And every time we turn around, he's added some band to the roster that makes you go, 'What?' That's something from the beginning that we always respected about the label and still do—it's amazing that it has survived."

LIVING DANGEROUSLY

Saunier's Deerhoof—a Cubist noise-pop trio from San Francisco—is an example of another KRS trait: Moon is willing to release any record by an artist he believes in. Deerhoof connected with Moon a decade ago—at the time, they were rehearsing in their San Francisco kitchen, feeding bass through a tiny amp and playing drums with fingers so as not to disturb the neighbors. The band caused KRS to lose money for seven consecutive years before becoming one of the label's most popular, says Saunier "[Moon] never even hinted that it was a problem for him," Saunier recalls. "It sounds corny, but I feel that they believed in us when it didn't feel like there was much of a reason to."

"Whenever a band doesn't really do that well and they want to do a record next year, Kill Rock Stars always says yes," concurs Brace Paine, guitarist for The Gossip, the punk/blues/basement dance-party jewel of the current KRS roster. "It's honest and raw for [Slim] to put himself out there [like that]."

When talking to KRS bands, it becomes clear that Moon's supportiveness is the glue that holds

this family together. Miranda July, whose last album was released on Kill Rock Stars in 1998, sums it up best. "(Moon) was the first person who—it sounds cheesy—more or less told me I was a 'star,'" she says. "At that time, I had just dropped out of college and was pretty unsure [of myself]. I definitely needed the support of him saying, 'Yes, you are really good at this. You can go as far as you want to.'"

Moon downplays his own achievements. "Recently, I'm feeling like we've had a lot less impact than I expected, to be honest," he says. Nonetheless, it appears that Moon and company will not stop the flow of fresh ideas anytime soon. Recent releases include reissues of post-punkers Delta 5 and Berlin's pioneering DIY electro outfit Stereo Total, plus renegade projects like *Starter Set*, a DVD of performances by modern dance groups like the Hysterica Dance Co. and the 4 Hard Gulps Theater Company. July, for one, is a fan. "[With *Starter Set*], I like the fact that it is some out-of-leftfield thing to do, not really commercial, but giving something new to a really hungry audience," she said. "That is a great indication that Slim is still Slim."

www.killrockstars.com, www.5rc.com



"[MOON] WAS THE FIRST PERSON WHO...TOLD ME I WAS A 'STAR.'" —MIRANDA JULY



RADICAL MOVES

Starter Set ushers modern dance into the future.

Since 2001, renegade dance troupes like Leg and Pants Dans Theatre and Hysterica Dance Co. have been flexing and swaying in bars, underground art spaces, and punk clubs to music by Erase Errata, Numbers, and Deerhoof. The *Starter Set: New Music and Dance for the Camera* (Kill Rock Stars, \$14.99), a DVD put together by Young People vocalist Katie Eastburn, presents a glimpse into this new strand of dance DNA with six videotaped dance pieces. If you're not already into Martha Graham or experimental video art, you may not be able to appreciate "I'm The Insides," a Gestalt therapy-inspired number about turning into a dog's insides, or "Your Grave," where Eastburn dances in the desert to electro-pop by Mount Sims. While lo-fi and way too esoteric for movie night, *Starter Set* nonetheless heralds a revolutionary future where modern dance meets punk aesthetics. *Tyra Bangs*

THE GOSSIP

Punk diva Beth Ditto serves up a soulful dish of rebellion.

Somewhere out there, Etta James and Iggy Pop are scratching their heads and asking, "How in Christ's name does The Gossip come up with this shit?" This Portland-by-way-of-Arkansas three-piece crushes their garage rock crescendo with more soul than BET and more angst than a pack of small-town teenagers. The band's latest offering, *Standing in the Way of Control*, is a potent blend of R&B and spasmodic rock that's got asses bouncing and bodies crashing from coast to coast. Lead singer Beth Ditto explains it all while hanging curtain rods. *Fred Miketa*

Standing in the Way of Control is out now on Kill Rock Stars. www.gossipyouth.com

How did you hook up with Kill Rock Stars?

I was 18 and we just moved from Arkansas. I didn't know shit about Kill Rock Stars. I literally thought that they were a tape label out of a bedroom. We started playing house parties, and Carrie Brownstein from Sleater-Kinney saw us, and Calvin Johnson from K Records saw us and asked for our 7". Then Carrie was like 'You should go on tour with us.' So we put out the 7" with K, did a six-week tour, and right before we left to go on our tour with Sleater-Kinney, they were like 'How do you guys feel about putting out a full length?' And I was like, 'OK.' That's how we got stuck with them.

How does it feel to play bigger venues as opposed to house parties and basement shows?

I miss little shows because I really hate business. I like money, but I hate business. I like energy. If we play a show [in a big venue], and there's 30 kids, that's a shitload of kids. That's like half of my graduating class. It just feels weird because you're in a huge venue and you're being treated all weird. But if you're in a basement, it just makes sense. I always find that I'm at my best—I perform better, I sound better, I feel more comfortable—when I'm at a show with 30 people. It's just more fun. I miss basement shows a lot.

Do you feel the spirit of punk is still alive and well?

I am a punk who makes music and I feel like I'm in a punk band. I think the spirit of The Gossip is very punk. It comes from a raw place.

Your new record definitely reflects that raw place.

When the record was made it was all about encouragement. This major label wanted our record, but we were doing it with Kill Rock Stars. We were like 'We're going to do it the way we can and make it as big as we can and spread this message, and make a living off of it'—which is capitalist, but necessary. What else am I going to do? Work at McDonald's?



DEERHOOF

From lullabies to explosions, a San Francisco quartet Deerhoof grows up... sort of.

Mixing bits of rock 'n' roll ammunition with nursery-rhyme vocals, San Francisco quartet Deerhoof taps into something explosive yet comforting, a sonic grenade thrown into the field of all things cliché in music today. With their seventh release, 2005's *The Runners Four* (KRS/5RC), fans met a newer, fresher, and more mature version of the band.

Recorded in six months at their Oakland, CA, practice space, *The Runners Four* is Deerhoof's

longest full-length, clocking in at roughly 56 minutes (*Milk Man* came in at 33, and *Apple O'* just over 31). On this album, the band transitioned from epic communal blasts of sound to each instrument having its own autobiography. On the phone from vacation in Santa Fe, NM, drummer and vocalist Greg Saunier explains how Deerhoof changed up their recording methods for this album.

"There had been a couple times, like on *Milk Man*, where I'd written a song and I had every detail completely figured out and there was no room," he says. "It basically was like 'Who is the guitar player in my band? Okay, you come here and you're going to be my robot now.'"

"We don't vote on things," Saunier continues. "If three people like something and one person doesn't like something then we don't do it. It's very time consuming and really takes a lot of effort from everybody, but it's also really rewarding because you finish the album and everybody totally feels like they really like it."

That's not to say Saunier is entirely happy; though critics and fans have praised the album, he still gets pretty heated when asked about record reviews. He pauses. Then chuckles. Then sighs deeply. "I tend to read [reviews] as much as I can to find any feedback on our music from any source," he finally reveals. "You know, it's just sort of my nature. I'm sort of obsessive and panic-stricken all the time."

www.deerhoof.killrockstars.com



STEREO TOTAL

A couple creates their own punk-electro-lounge utopia.

"It wasn't love at first sight, musically," says Brezel Göring of his first forays into music-making with girlfriend and Stereo Total co-conspirator Françoise Cactus. Eventually, the pair struck upon a way to combine Göring's background in the Neue Deutsche Welle ("German New Wave") scene with Cactus' love for French *chansons* and '60s garage rock. In 1995, they released their debut, *Oh Ah!* (Bungalow), and over the course of five more albums cemented a signature sound: minimal and cute electro-pop backdrops topped by knowingly naive lyrics about horror films and bunnies and Holiday Inns (sung by Cactus in heavily-accented English, Japanese, German, and many other languages, including her native French). With an EP, *Discotheque*, just released on Disko-B and KRS reissuing *My Melody* (1998) and *Jukebox Alarm* (1999), we caught up with the duo at home in Berlin.

Vivian Host

www.stereototal.de

What has been the biggest change for you as a band since *My Melody* and *Jukebox Alarm* came out?

Françoise: At this time, there were two other people in the band. Now it's just the two of us. It's much easier and it has changed everything, even the music. It made it more simple and more minimal. [I was really influenced by] this band in the '80s in France called Rita Mitsouko. There were just two of them—a man and a woman—and they were also a couple. I think it's nice. Anyway, I have always loved minimal music. You can see that on our cover version of Hot Chocolate "Heaven's in the Backseat of My Cadillac" (from *Jukebox Alarm*). It's not funky at all! It's almost nothing. I think that *My Melody* and *Jukebox Alarm* are not as well produced as *Musique Automatique*; the sound is sometimes a bit more scratchy and rough. I like sounds that are wild... but still not scratching my ears.

You two are very influenced by '60s French music. Who is your favorite artist?

Brezel: Always, [we] come back to Serge Gainsbourg. He had a very psychological way of writing songs. They're not just good pop tunes with good instrumentation or good melodies; his lyrics also have a double meaning—something really intelligent or really dirty but really funny at the same time. Also, he used jazz, rock 'n' roll, and even psychedelic stuff and reggae and put it all in this *chanson* context. [I like] this way of using music—taking it out of its context and putting it in another—and this is something I like to do myself.

What are you working on right now?

Brezel: We are doing a musical about Patty Hearst [in April]; Gina D'Orio from Cobra Killer is going to play Patty. In Germany, [we just released] a record with six new songs, *Discotheque*. There's one song that goes "*I hate everybody in the discotheque/I don't like pills/I don't like coke/I don't like the stroboscope.*" Also, did you hear about this life-sized puppet Françoise made out of wool? It's called Woolita. She showed it in a group exhibition last year and... there was this scandal because this puppet looked so fleshy. There's a little book about the scandal and the tabloid yellow press [published by Martin Schmitz Verlag] and [it comes with] a record we made where the puppet is singing.



STARS ON STARS: Artists and label heads show love for Kill Rock Stars

"Elliott Smith provides a reminder that modern music can have intense emotional impact, be interesting, accessible, and inspirational. I'm sure I'm not the only one who considers him the Lennon of my generation." **RJD2**

"Their roster reminds me of an ex that hates me." **Slug, Atmosphere**

"I bought my first Bikini Kill record in 1995 in Melbourne, Australia. I didn't know what KRS was or what an indie label meant back then. It wasn't 'til two years later, when we made our first Chicks on Speed 7-inch, that I looked at the record label in more detail." **Alex Murray-Leslie, Chicks on Speed**

"KRS and Bikini Kill were a big inspiration for me to start Tigerbeat6; alongside labels like Alternative Tentacles, Gravity, Threoneg, GSL, and Lookout, they paved the way for the real American independent label. I admired them even more when they set up 5RC and started releasing my current favorite band, Xiu Xiu, as well as other great Bay Area peeps like xbrx and Deerhoof." **Kid 606, Tigerbeat6**

"No matter what tour I'm on or whatever the reason is that I'm on the road, I'm always listening to Unwound. I last saw them play on September 11, 2002 in Atlanta. They killed it, and I was pissed I didn't get a shirt with a horse on it. Then they broke up. I still play them

out, ironically, as much as the first two Elliott Smith records." **Prefuse 73**

"Some record labels feed on the fertile and radical food that's hidden in the punk, raunchy bottom of our corporate-crazy music food chain. Slim Moon's Kill Rock Stars is a label that has always worked the other way 'round. Constantly fertilizing the unkempt underbelly of tomorrow's sound, KRS has become an independent rallying cry around that ol' down-home saying "For the fucking love of music, stupid!" **DJ Olive, theAgriculture**

"I was staying at a friend's house in Olympia, WA, and one of the housemates walked into the living room and

told me 'You have to listen to this record. This is the greatest thing you are ever going to hear.' Whenever someone tells me something like that, I automatically kind of tune out... but the thing is, he was right. He put on Sleater-Kinney's *Dig Me Out* (KRS 279) and it was indeed the greatest thing I ever heard. I want to say thank you to Kill Rock Stars for putting out their records, but maybe the tons of money I have spent on their catalog (Bikini Kill, Heavens to Betsy, Bratmobile) is thanks enough. **Fred Armisen, SNL/former Trenchmouth drummer**

"5RC and Kill Rock Stars has been releasing some of the most exciting, important, and groundbreaking music for the past decade and has inspired us to constantly push the envelope of our musical abilities." **Daniel and Jess of The Post Office Gals**



THE SHY'S

Drum & bass producer Shy FX is still funky after all these years.

WORDS: RACHEL SHIMP ILLUSTRATION: UPNORTH

On “Don’t Rush,” from Shy FX and T Power’s new album, *Diary of a Digital Soundboy*, R&B vocalist Di reprises the smooth sound that made the production duo’s ubiquitous “Shake Ur Body” a smash three years ago, this time singing an ode to taking it slow (“*We don’t need to rush/Love will wait for us*”). Delayed gratification can be romantic, but drum & bass fans waiting for an uplifting jolt of jump-up, dub, and blues flavors won’t need to wait longer—or look further—than *Diary*, released last September on Shy’s new label, Digital Soundboy.

“THAT’S THE POINT OF THIS MUSIC; IT’S A MELTING POT OF DIFFERENT STYLES.”

Barring Roni Size/Reprazent’s Mercury Prize-snatching *New Forms* in 1997, Shy FX and T Power have arguably had the most commercial success among their peers; their new productions are poised to follow suit, whether they (and jungle elitists) like it or not. After a limited, solo Stateside tour last fall, Shy–Andre Williams to his mum and friends–spoke to *XLR8R* from London about *Diary*, the evolution of the scene, and how to deal with those silly haters.

www.shyfxandtpower.com

From your initial *Diary* tour, what do you see happening for drum & bass in the US?

I like Drive-By in NYC, but the parties I’ve enjoyed the most recently have definitely been in LA, especially Respect. The vibe there seems to be really on point. I think people knuckled down and focused on building a scene—the main problem [elsewhere] is people relying on international DJs and not supporting their local ones. Over here we have the whole rave culture that the States really doesn’t have, and it’s easier to build. But I think with the internet, people are now up-to-date and clued in to what’s going on.

And what’s taking place in the UK?

At the moment, it’s a transitional period. A lot of the older cats that had been in their comfort zone too long—who had been trying to maintain a lifestyle and be lazy—I think they’re getting a wake-up call. I don’t blame them for getting caught up, they’re only human, but it’s been too long that they’ve been knocking out tunes to make a quick pound. Now it’s back to the music, I feel.

***Diary* is your second vocal drum & bass album. Regarding *Set It Off*, a BBC forum user complained “Keep d&b for the darkside.” What do you make of the divided attitudes on funkier styles?**

It’s silly! When I first got involved in the scene, we’d have events where everything was represented and played. That’s the point of this

music; it’s a melting pot of different styles. Those that prefer the dark side of things and the soulful side are clashing, but it’s changing—this time around it’s been accepted more or less from all corners of the scene.

The success of “Shake Ur Body” was pinpointed as the moment drum & bass crossed into the mainstream. How did things change for you and T Power (Marc Royal) when your singles charted?

They didn’t really. You get profiled for a minute; you get 101 remix requests, but at the end of the day it only really changes if I go out of my way to recreate those tunes all the time. Mostly it enabled us to take a year out to put time into an album.

On *Diary*, you each made two songs and collaborated on six. Your love of soul is particularly obvious on “Sheets,” with Noel McCoy singing the Isley Brothers’ song. Who would you like to work with next?

At the minute, I’m putting down music and thinking about what kind of voice I want on what track. I’m listening to everything, not just R&B. From bloody punk to...the other day Marc brought in some orchestral music. I’d love to work with certain R&B vocalists but I don’t think many would get the beats we’re doing. At first with Di, we had to make the track sound like R&B for her to understand it. Unless you’ve been to a rave and get the whole vibe, it’s difficult—singers think it’s too fast. So we half-timed the beats, she sang, and we programmed around it. Afterward, she was coming out to the raves. She was converted!

In 2002, you said UK hip-hop’s production was lacking, but “now that MCs are showing their own identity, it can work.” How do you feel about grime’s rise since? Do grime and drum & bass influence each other?

Talk to any of the kids on road and everyone wants to be a grime MC.

It’s unregulated on the business side, but the talent and the music is on fire. Early jungle definitely influenced grime, [especially] a lot of the old, distorted bass sounds they use in their productions, but I wouldn’t say they’re influencing each other at the moment. Although, we’ve just done a track with Dizzee Rascal and we’re looking to work more with some of the grime artists, so we’ll see what happens.

The dub sounds championed by your former label, Ebony, are being done exceptionally by artists like Breakage, who’s on your new Digital Soundboy imprint.

I think people have started doing it better, taking it more seriously, and not just putting unnecessary edits all over the place. At the same time, DSB isn’t just about that side of things, which is why we released “Feelings” [the first single].

Aside from stylistic departures, what’s the biggest change you’ve seen in your 11 years on the scene?

The download culture of the internet—the theft of music is alarming. You spend years trying to learn your craft and, as Marc said to me the other day, it makes it worthless when people download your stuff for free. It’s disappointing, but at the same time, if it wasn’t for the net, half the people I’ve met up with recently—half the guys on my label—I wouldn’t have heard of. I wouldn’t have easy access to their beats if we couldn’t be sending tunes back and forth via AIM.

How do you spend your spare time?

What’s that? This *is* my spare time right now, and afterward I’ll be running back to the studio, so at the moment there’s no such thing.

PRIMAL SCREAM

SHY FX’S ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DRUM & BASS HALL OF FAME.



Shy FX and UK Apachi
“Original Nuttah”
(S.O.U.R., 1994)

Williams’ third single for S.O.U.R. (Sound of the Underground Records), where he met and began collaborating with Royal at just 17, showcases Williams’ sound-system roots: “Nuttah”’s rolling bass and rough-and-tumble snares, along with UK Apachi’s twisting ragga vocals, punctured the national chart with primal efficiency.



Shy FX
“This Style”
(S.O.U.R., 1995)

A sample of Eric B. and Rakim’s “I Know You Got Soul” (“*This is how it should be done/This style is identical to none*”) was co-opted the following year by A-Sides’ “Punks,” giving props to hip-hop while carrying the 1987 classic toward the new millennium.



Shy FX
“Bambaata”
(Ebony, 1997)

Re-released as the B-side to “Feelings,” Williams’ first single for Digital Soundboy took the term “jungle” literally, folding the hum of crickets, the shriek of an elephant, and a lion’s roar into its bongo-natty frenzy. Remixed a year later by Dillinja and Roni Size as “Bambaata 2012,” this anthem is considered by many to be one of the top 10 drum & bass tunes of all time.



Shy FX & T Power feat. Di
“Shake Ur Body”
(Positiva, 2002)

R&B vocalist Di was recording in the same studio as Shy and T, and was lured away to contribute her pipes to their biggest hit to date, which rose to #7 on the charts. “Shake Ur Body” brought Latin rhythms—and fun—back to the genre.



Shy FX & T Power
“Feelin U”
(FFRR, 2003)

The second single from *Set It Off* featured Kele Le Roc (best known for her sexy turn on Basement Jaxx’s “Romeo”) and another impossibly infectious Latin melody. If you can’t dance to this, you don’t have a pulse.

KINGS

XLR8R's guide to North America's finest reggae shops.
 WORDS: JESSE SERWER PHOTOS: ADAM CARVELL (TWELVE TRIBES), FRITZ (AQUARIUS), ADAM LOPEZ (WISDOM), JESSE SERWER (JAMMYLAND & MOODIES), MARCELLA VOLPINTESTA (ZION'S GATE) TYPE DESIGN: UPNORTH

You can satisfy all your vinyl needs over the internet nowadays but there's still no substitute for the experience of the record store. This holds particularly true in the world of reggae, where shoppers often have the opportunity to be advised on their purchases by the real experts. Until shortly before his death two years ago, reggae godfather Clement "Sir Coxsone" Dodd could be found manning the counter at Coxsone's Music City, down under the J-Z tracks in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn. In London, you'll find the UK's pre-eminent roots ambassador Mikey Dread behind the counter at Roots and Culture Music on Leytonstone Road. Even Prince Buster, now a Miami resident, still shows up behind the register at Prince Buster's Record Shack when he's in Kingston. Here's a look at some of the United States' premier reggae retailers and the figures behind them.



“A little Jamaican hideaway in the desert” is how Trenchtown native Papa Ranger describes Twelve Tribes Reggae Shop, which, in addition to being the only reggae specialty store between California and Texas, serves as a mechanic’s workshop and the premier venue for live reggae events in Tucson. While there isn’t much of a West Indian community to speak of in this city of Arizona as well as the area’s large Native American community, according to Papa Ranger, a veteran soundsystem operator who moved to Tucson 15 years ago after originally opening the store in Detroit. “Native folks are more into reggae than anyone else in this country,” says the 50-year-old Ranger, who runs the business with his 21-year-old son, Jamar. While some dancehall is stocked, roots consciousness is the name of the game. “I screen my newer stuff before I even buy. If it doesn’t sound like something I want to represent to somebody, if the lyrics are incorrect, I don’t buy.”

345 N. 5th Ave., Tucson
 520-620-1810,
www.emol.org/twelvetribes

TWELVE TRIBES REGGAE SHOP

BEST-SELLERS: “When you can pick something up at Target, that’s usually when we drop it,” says Papa Ranger. “We’re in the business of oldies but goodies. [That said], Bob Marley *Legend* probably sold the most for us.”

- PAPA RANGER RECOMMENDS:**
1. Black Uhuru *Chill Out* (Taxi/Palm Pictures)
 2. Burning Spear *Marcus Garvey* (Fox/Palm Pictures)
 3. Dennis Brown *Wolves and Leopards* (DEB)
 4. Jimmy Cliff “Originator” 45
 5. U-Roy *Wake The Town (1966-1971)* (Rhino)



Above: outside Twelve Tribes Reggae Shop; the store bird.
 Bottom: Twelve Tribes' book selection; plant garden outside the shop; Papa Ranger, owner of Twelve Tribes.



4308 Mission St., San Francisco
415-841-1258
www.wisdomrecords.com

WISDOM RECORDS

Javier Ibarra—DJ I-Vier of San Francisco sound system Jah Warrior Shelter Hi-Fi—was selling 45s out of his house until the operation “got so popular we had to cut cats out of my living room.” So he and fellow selector Alexis Friedman (a.k.a. Empress I Lexis) “found a good deal on real estate” and opened Wisdom Records, Northern California’s first reggae specialty shop, at Mission and Silver in the city’s Excelsior district. According to Ibarra, 70% of Wisdom’s business is 45s, but with no other reggae-first outlets anywhere else in the area, mixes, CDs, and 12”s by the Bay Area’s finest—the Lustre Kings, Rocker-T, Luna Angel, Rankin Screw, *XLR8R* scribe Ross Hogg, and Ibarra’s own Jah Warrior Shelter—are keys to the business as well. “We were getting a lot of local DJ remixes on 12” and “Murder She Wrote”—but the RIAA started busting on a lot of the DJs so that’s slowed down. Not to boast but my crew, Jah Warrior, did a series of roots CDs and those are some of our best-sellers.”

BEST-SELLERS: “The two biggest records at our shop are ‘Jamrock’ and (Tanya Stephens’) ‘It’s A Pity.’ We probably sold close to 1,000 copies of the ‘Jamrock’ 45,” Ibarra says.

DJ I-VIER RECOMMENDS:

1. Fantan Mojah *Hail The King* LP or CD (Greensleeves)
2. Seasons Rhythm (Rhythm Streetz Series Volume 5) LP, CD or 45s (Don Corleon)
3. Sizzla *Da Real Live Thing* DVD/CD (Special Edition 2 Disc Package) (VP)
4. *Selected Speeches Of H.I.M. Haile Selassie I, 1918-1967*
5. *Rockers: 25th Anniversary Edition* DVD

What do metal and reggae have in common besides dreadlocks? The two genres share top billin’ at Seattle’s Zion’s Gate Records. In a few short years, the outfit has grown from owner Stephen Benbrook importing UK dub to his apartment into a general-interest music store that also counts house, drum & bass, ragga jungle, and hip-hop among its specialties. “I’ve been into metal my whole life—I didn’t discover reggae until I was older,” says Benbrook, who spins steppers under the name DJ Elevate. “When I started expanding, I noticed I was selling everything but metal. Now, we’re finding that a lot of the same people who buy reggae also buy the heavy stuff, especially on the internet.” One of the biggest sellers of both metal and reggae on Ebay, Benbrook recently began releasing dub and ragga (the first releases include *Dub Magic*, a compilation of dubplates from UK producers Alpha & Omega, and Debaser’s recent “Hills and Valleys” 12”) under the Zion’s Gate name, and plans to launch a separate metal imprint, Kreation Records, this spring.

BEST-SELLERS: “Reggae and metal are definitely our top sellers. Among reggae records, *King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown* has always done really well for us.”

DJ ELEVATE RECOMMENDS:

1. The Congos *Heart of the Congos* (VP/Blood & Fire)
2. Lee Perry *Return of the Super Ape* (VP)
3. Sleep *Sleep’s Holy Mountain* (Earache)
4. Witchcraft *Firewood* (Rise Above)
5. Earth 2 (Sub Pop)

1100 E. Pike St., Seattle
206-568-5446
www.zionsgate.com



60 E. 3rd St. (at 2nd Ave.), Manhattan
212-614-0185
www.jammyland.com

JAMMYLAND

While you might expect to see people like Lloyd “Bullwackie” Barnes or Congo Ashanti Roy inside the authentically roots-centric Jammyland, the store’s location in the heart of the East Village (across the street from long-running DJ shop Dance Tracks) ensures some more surprising visitors as well. Billy Gibbons from ZZ Top, Walter Becker from Steely Dan, and actor Michael Rappaport are all Jammyland regulars; even *Friends* star Lisa Kudrow has been known to pass through, according to Ira Heaps, a Manhattan native who opened up shop in 1992 after returning from a five-year sojourn in Jamaica. In abundance are NYU students and other newbies eager for guidance from Heaps (who is the bassist in Ari Up’s band, The True Warriors) and his helpful staff (Black Redemption Sound selector Ras Kush was a fixture behind the counter for years). Dub, rocksteady, roots, and ska reissues are definitely the focus here, but all the key new dancehall releases are usually in stock as well.

BEST-SELLERS: “The *King’s Dub* record is selling real well since, well, we’re the place to get it. *Heart of the Congos* is our all-time best-seller. When people walk in off the street—usually white kids with a rock ‘n’ roll or pop background—and say ‘I’m new to reggae, can you hook me up with something cool?’ that is what we give them. It embodies the whole roots vibe of Jammyland—(Ashanti Roy) is a friend of ours, it incorporates Lee Perry and Scientist. Most of the time they’re like ‘Oh my god, can I have more like that?’”

IRA RECOMMENDS:

1. Dr. Alimantado *Best Dressed Chicken In Town* (Greensleeves)
2. Horace Andy *Dancehall Style* (Wackie’s)
3. Downbeat the Ruler *Killer Dancehall Instrumentals Studio One Collection* (Rounder)
4. The Congos *Heart of the Congos* (VP/Blood and Fire)
5. Burning Spear *Presenting Burning Spear* (Studio One)

A South Florida strip mall might be the last place in the world you’d expect to find authentic culture, but a suburban stretch of southwest Miami is where you’ll find the US outpost of Kingston’s legendary Aquarius Records. Behind the counter, often flanked by his many kids, is the sage Herman Chin-Loy, a wealth of knowledge and wisdom for whom even the most basic of questions elicits an answer full of depth and clarity. Leaving the original Aquarius shop to his brother-in-law (Bass Odyssey Soundsystem founder Bunny), Chin-Loy set up shop in Miami 11 years ago—but, unfortunately, the original Augustus Pablo doesn’t see much future for reggae vinyl in his adopted hometown. “Everybody downloads off the computer or burns a CD,” Chin-Loy says, noting his new focus on clothing and general goods for the Jamaican community. “That’s how I am going to pay the rent.” Still, with its selection of new CDs and old 45s, Aquarius remains one of the go-to music operations in a city with the second largest Jamaican population in the US.

BEST-SELLERS: “The biggest thing is Bob Marley t-shirts, Puma sneakers in the Jamaican colors, and Cooyah tanktops. What do you call them, wifebeaters? We’re also selling a lot of paintings from Jamaica lately.”

HERMAN CHIN-LOY RECOMMENDS:

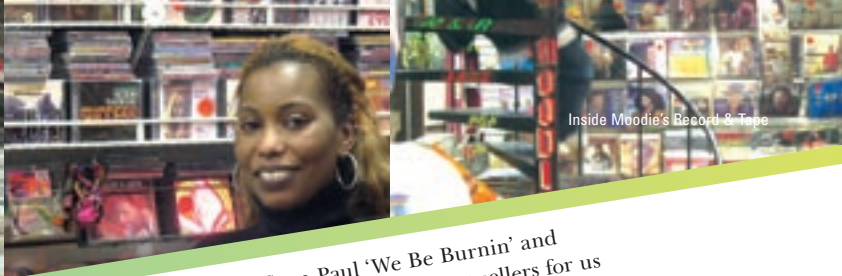
1. Various Artists *Universal Message Vol. 3* (VP)
2. Warrior King *Hold the Faith* (VP/Universal)
3. Junior Kelly *Tough Life* (VP)
4. Luciano *Gold: Very Best of Luciano* (Jetstar)
5. Damian Marley *Welcome to Jamrock* CD (Tuff Gong)

9487 SW 160th St., Miami
305-292-9874
www.aquariusrecords.com

AQUARIUS RECORDS



Top row: rows of 7”s inside Wisdom Records; Wisdom crew’s Javier Ibarra (DJ I-Vier), Alexis Friedman (DJ Empress), and Doland Dahlstrom (DJ Irie Dole); stacks of Wisdom 45s; inside Jammyland; owner Ira Heaps; racks of 45s at Jammyland. Bottom row: inside Zion’s Gate; owner Stephen Benbrook; Aquarius owner Herman Chin-Loy; inside Aquarius.



Inside Moodie's Record & Tape

www.moodiesrecords.com

MOODIE'S RECORD & TAPE
3976 White Plains Rd. (at 225th St.), The Bronx
718-654-8368

Greenwich Village might be the vinyl capital of the world, but NYC's pre-eminent reggae shop is in a far-flung corner of the northeastern Bronx in Flatbush, the heart and soul of Caribbean New York. Directly under the 22nd Street elevated station on White Plains Road is Moodie's Record & Tape, with its stacks upon stacks of classic roots and dancehall 45s, stray Studio One originals, and all the latest slackness on CD and DVD. "If anybody is starting a back up to now," boasts Earl Moodie, who opened shop in 1983 after working at the now-defunct Brad's Records (an early Bronx reggae shop opened by Clocktower Records founder Brad Osbourne). Moodie, who counts Kool Herc and Japanese soundbwoys Mighty Crown among his loyal customers, promises to resurrect the Moodies label—which issued such hard-to-find mid-'80s classics as Junior Delgado's "Illegal Gun" and Gregory Isaacs' "How I Feel"—via a highly necessary rarities compilation this year. **Moodie's Jam City** in nearby Eastchester (3428-A Boston Road, 718-231-4575) is operated by Earl's son, Doobie.

BEST-SELLERS: "The Sean Paul 'We Be Burnin' and Richie Spice 'Earth Alert' 45s are the biggest sellers for us right now. I've never seen more excitement here than when 50 Cent (*Get Rich or Die Tryin'*) came out."

- EARL MOODIE RECOMMENDS:**
1. *Bob Andy Songbook* (Studio One)
 2. *Heptones On Top* (Studio One)
 3. *Hugh Mundell Africa Must Be Free By 1983* (Message/RAS/Greensleeves)
 4. *Barry Brown Far East* (Hitbound/Channel One)
 5. *Jacob Miller Dread, Dread* (United Artists/Island)

ERNIE B'S

Chances are, if you can't find it through Ernie B's Reggae Distribution (www.ebreggae.com), it's probably not in print anymore. With more than 13,000 titles, the El Dorado Hills, CA-based wholesaler/internet retailer currently has the world's most extensive reggae music catalog. Proprietor Ernie Boetius explains the science behind the reggae retail game.

Who are your strongest customers?
Amoeba in San Francisco and Hollywood. They have management that understands you need to spend a little time and sacrifice a little space and payroll to make a good reggae section. Most record store managers don't understand or want to focus on exactly what it would take to have one.

How much of your business is wholesale to stores versus direct to consumers?
It's probably 80% wholesale and 20% to individuals.

I'm sure you've had some big surprises or accidental scores...
We purchased about 20,000 records from Tin Reddy's basement in 1995. It was Christmas every day going through those boxes. We sold them all for 10% of what they were worth but we made a lot of people happy. When you think you've seen it all, someone comes with a record you can't believe exists.

What are your best-sellers?
It's usually things that are exclusive to us. We're selling a lot of Lacksley Castell's *Princess Lady*, which we re-issued with Negus Roots, and Mikey Dread's *Evolutionary Rockers*. Prince Buster's *Fly Flying Ska* has also been a huge one for us.

BEST OF THE REST: NEW YORK

There are probably more reggae-centric shops in New York City than the whole rest of the US combined. South of Prospect Park in Brooklyn, Flatbush Avenue becomes "Yard Street," dotted with shacks carrying the latest soundsystem mixes, bootleg artist CDs, and Passa Passa DVDs.

You'll have to travel to the farthest-flung corner of East Flatbush to find **Jah Life Records & Dub Studio** (1234 Utica Ave. at Avenue D, 718-629-0841), home of the Jah Life label—which put out Barrington Levy's seminal early '80s output—and Jah Life International Sound System.

Crown Heights' **Ethiopian Taste** (985 Nostrand Ave., 718-774-0804, www.ethiopian taste.com) is another store with a label, and more books about Haile Selassie than you knew existed. Over in Manhattan, soundsystem **Deadly Dragon Sound** (102-B Forsyth St., 646-613-0139, www.deadlydragonsound.com) recently opened a location in Chinatown and these new kids on the block already have one of the best selections of 45s in the city.

White Plains Road has NYC's most untouched cluster of record shops, with several excellent vinyl-oriented stores within blocks of the 225th Street station. **Millennium Records** (4045 White Plains Rd., 718-515-1909) has everything Caribbean, from soca to calypso, and a deep, disorganized selection of '80s and '90s dancehall singles.

And is there any better combination in the world than old vinyl and porn? **Tony Ryan's** (3956 White Plains Rd., 718-798-0773, www.tonyryanrecords.com) stocks both and, despite the owners' Jamaican accents, their strong suit is actually used R&B and soul. Out in Jamaica-Queens, of course—is the world headquarters and flagship storefront of **VP Records** (170-21 Jamaica Ave., 718-297-5802, www.vprecords.com) For more on VP, see the feature in XLR8R Issue 81.

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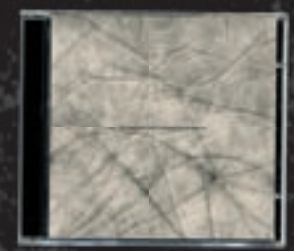


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DJ Magazine

"Ominous finally gives the resurgent UK hip-hop scene something akin to Jurassic 5 or The Roots." **Time Out (London)**

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JAMMER FREQUEN- CIES

From futuristic beats to a Superman-esque emcee alias, Jammer and his Jah Mek The World camp flip the script on grime.

WORDS: SARAH BENTLEY PHOTOS: DAVID BOWEN TYPE DESIGN: UPNORTH

A menacing string B-line kicks in as a budget camera shot pans around a shabby street in London's East End. Viewers prepare themselves for the kind of gritty, voyeuristic journey around a UK hood that is synonymous with grime and then... *blam!* A 5' 6" dreadlocked super hero—resplendent in a purple, black, and green homemade one-piece, facemask and cape—ricochets into the shot, Karate Kid-style.

Leaping on top of phone boxes and cars, the half-comic/half-frightening character barks, "*It's the Merkle Man/Never gonna fix that Urkel man/Continue to circle man/All for the green and purple man.*" Who is this Lil' Jon-like figure, rhyming about sitcom nerd Steve Urkel, chucking boys in business suits out of phone booths, and carting big girls around East London on the back of his four-wheeler?

The man behind the Merkle mask is Jammer, formerly the official producer of the N.A.S.T.Y. crew and currently the figurehead of pioneering grime label Jah Mek The World Productions. Known for blood-curdling, future-industrial basslines favored by top MCs like Dizzee Rascal, Wiley, and D Double E, Jammer's MC alter ego is a hilarious twist on the grime cliché of a screwface producer sitting in a graffiti-blasted basement. "It definitely took people by surprise," laughs Jammer.

In a scene where hard-earned reputations are shattered with a single clash or potent diss track, stepping out as Merkle Man took balls of steel. "I put the suit on, looked in the mirror, and thought,

"Shit, am I gonna walk down the street like this? Once I'm outside there's no turning back. There's 40 mans watching and I'm filming outside Leytonstone Underground Station," recalls Jammer. "I knew it was all or nothing."

WHISTLE WHILE YOU MERK

Jammer pulled a Pharrell and stepped out from the anonymity of producing at his 21st birthday bash (he's now 23), where he MCed alongside friend Dizzee Rascal. After contributing to sessions held at his home studio, he was encouraged by MCs to take up the mic seriously. Littering his flow with fiercely delivered yet amusing self-penned catch phrases (neckle, seckle, meckle, merkle) and highlighting on his own posse-cut productions like "Saw It Coming," "Slew Dem," and "Joy Ride," he catapulted into the MC elite.

Like The Neptunes' big man, it's not so much Jammer's rhyme skills people have bought into but his enigmatic character. Ricocheting around stages like the Energizer bunny on speed, Jammer's manic aura is infectious. Live PAs of Merkle Man see crowds breaking into fervent moshing. Jammer's unbilled performance of the track at a recent Kano showcase sent the crowd into a riot even after the fifth rewind. Not one of Kano's lyrics got the same reaction.

So what exactly does all of Jammer's vernacular mean? "[The word] 'merk' has been in the grime scene since day one. If you 'merk' someone, you've killed them in a clash or dissed them in a

lyric," explains Jammer. "'Merkle Man' is a funny way of saying I can merk anyone in the scene." And neckle? "Neckle means anything that's good. Seckle means 'chillout.' And meckle I use instead of mental. Everyone's tired of hearing the same old shit. That's why the whole nekkle thing caught on so quickly."

POWER BARS

Jammer (Jahmek Power) was born to Rastafarian parents in Leytonstone, East London; he works in a basement studio in the house he grew up in. The home has an industrious, lively energy. Posters of Bob Marley share space with family photographs, one of which shows the eldest of his four sisters graduating from law school. The kitchen bursts with his younger sister's friends practicing dance routines as his mother cooks, seemingly unhindered. His father, a reggae soundsystem operator and musician, keeps a watchful eye over Jahsiya, Jammer's three-year-old son, as he scoots about humming the basslines of "Daddy's songs."

Jammer has music in his blood. At 12, he was getting bookings to DJ reggae, dancehall, and jungle with his friend Supa D; by 14, he was commanding his own soundsystem, Demolition. His first experience of UK garage was his older sister playing him Karl 'Tuff Enuff' Brown tapes. "Coming from a reggae background I thought, 'What's this funny music? This is swag,'" he says of the initially house-and-R&B-driven two-step sound. A few years later, during the So Solid Crew-dominated era, Jammer worked at the distribution company Essentials, and was impressed by the amount of vinyl that homegrown talent was shifting. "Mans was moving 6,000 copies in a week," he says. "I knew from then making tunes was the only way forward."

Three years later, in 2002, Jammer merged the bass-heavy fundamentals of reggae with the double-time structure of garage to become one of the founding fathers of grime. "It's the dirt down your fingernails," he says, describing the sound. "The residue in the bath. I've never liked the term as it's everything bad—but, at the end of the day, the music's grimy and that's why it's stuck." He takes a pull on a spliff, then reflects with confidence, "Whatever you want to call it, in 10 years time it's gonna be as big as hip-hop. Just remember, it was me and Wiley that started it."

www.jahmektheworldproductions.com

ESSENTIAL JAMMER RELEASES

Fire Hydrant EP (Jah Mek The World)
 Neckle Records Da EP (Neckle Records)
 World Destruction EP (Jah Mek The World)
 "Merkle Man" feat. Jammer (Jah Mek The World)
 "I Do Me" featuring Skepta (Jah Mek The World)

JAH MEK THE WORLD CREW

Producers: Mizz Beats, Lewi White, Biggaman, Flamin' Angey, Skitz Beatz, Ramboss, Bandit, Chaos, and Shadetek from Manhattan.

MCs: Ears, Knuckles, and Gully Ranger

...IF YOU'RE NASTY

Meet 19-year-old grime producer Mizz Beats

Mizz Beats is the jewel in Jah Mek The World's otherwise male-dominated crown. Working with the label since she was 17, the 19-year-old producer (born Iman Yanee) connected with Jammer through an unlikely incident in the Leytonstone post office.

"I was standing in line when these two guys came in trying to sell the *Lord Of The Decks*, [a grime DVD documentary]. They asked me if I wanted to buy one and when I told them I didn't have enough money they gave me it. One of the guys turned out to be rapper DM. We exchanged numbers and when we hooked up I played him a CD with 20 of my tracks. He took me to Jammer, played him the CD, and I've been working with him since."

A hip-hop and R&B producer by trade—"I was into hip-hop before I could talk properly," she claims—Mizz Beats was, oddly, never a fan of grime. "I couldn't get into it. It was watching *Lord Of The Decks* that made me realize it was good because it represented our own way of living."

Thanks to her unique blending of hip-hop and R&B with grime sentiments (double-time rhythms, stark instrumentation)—and Jammer's endorsement—Mizz Beats has experienced a meteoric rise to prominence. "I did the 'Signal' tune with D Double E and everything went mad," she says. "I've only just started but I've done tracks on Dizzee's LP, Estelle's LP, Lady Sovereign's LP, and I've got some big things lined up with US artists next year. I'd like to think it was all down to my music but I'm sure it helps being a woman in such a male-dominated genre."



To check out Juliette Lewis's signature shoe by DVS and other styles visit www.dvs-girls.com
 Juliette and The Licks debut record "You're Speaking My Language" is out now. www.julietteandthelicks.com



The Juliette 2 available in various colorways also in Black shown.

SHOES

Questions for the sneaker game's most provocative players.
WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTOS: JUPITER DESPHY (UNDFTD), IVO GREUTNER (PUMA),
MORGAN HOWLAND (HUF), MDOT (JB CLASSICS), DUSTIN ROSS (VANS)

With the sneaker-collecting hustle running rampant—spanning everyone from junior high kids to corporate execs—we got to thinking about the people behind the shoes themselves. So we hollered at Undfnd's James Bond and HUF's Keith Hufnagel, who own the stores that stoke the fire for hard-to-get kicks. We phoned JB of JB Classics—on a break from designing displays for the next Sneaker Pimps show—to ask him about running an independent sneaker company. From Puma HQ, industrial design powerhouse Gavin Ivester broke down the connections between sport-shoe technology and fashion forwardness, and Vans' Steve Mills gave us a look inside the mind of Vans Vault. Here's a sneak peek behind the scenes.



JB in the storeroom of his San Francisco JB Classics studio

JASON BASS
Owner, JB Classics
San Francisco, CA
www.suite2206.com

What was your inspiration to start JB Classics? I was influenced a lot by going to Japan and seeing the color palette [of the shoes] and the intensity of the testing core footwear companies were doing out there. There were a lot of shoes that never saw the light of day. That inspired me to investigate all these holes in the market that existed. I have an MFA and [have had] this whole creative bone in me from early on, and I sort of applied that to this lifestyle void in sneakers. It was something that I experimented with and it became my life real quick.

Do all your shoes start off with a theme? I'm constantly influenced. An example would be going to the UK and stumbling upon the Jack the Ripper tour that goes on in East London and then being like 'I'd like to work out a Jack the Ripper-style shoe.' Then comes the shaping,

the silhouette of the shoe, the color palette, researching, and before I know it, it's all applied to the footwear. A few months later, I'll hear a rapper like Kanye West mentioning Jack the Ripper [the guy, not the shoe] in an interview. Also, I find myself more now pushing into experimenting with actual footwear construction—the materials, the assembly process. For instance, I'll want rougher edges or certain materials to apply to killer bee graphics that I am coming out with.

Do you have a favorite shoe that you've made? Some of the favorites are the huge collectible stuff. Me and NYC Lase—this graffiti head—put together the MÖTUG (Monsters of the Underground), which had 10 artists [including Futura, Doze Green, and Shepard Fairey] on one shoe, produced 24 times, and released in a gallery in the Village. That was a huge inspiration to me. Once or twice a year I'll have a shoe that will shock me at how it comes together. Usually it has to do with collaborative efforts or a graphic theme that will play across many markets at once.

What is the longest you've worked on a shoe to get it right?

Oh, I just move on. I seriously look at it in a painterly way. Like, if I'm having a frustrating time with this painting, I'll move on to make another painting because the ideas are endlessly flowing. Lately, I've been nailing every sample [I get back from the factory]: the translations, the graphical stories, the color combinations, the materials. If anything, there are some construction issues that happen in any development stage, [usually] a matter of changing materials or applying different shoelaces or inner linings.

What kinds of things are exciting to you right now? To me, it's just the acceptance of this whole sneaker culture. What was once this underbelly type of thing is now making really huge moves. It's really nice to see old graff heads and different designers coming out and putting a face to the retail part of this whole movement. And it's global. Wherever I go, there's another 10 new stores opening and you see the skate market adapting to this whole sought-after sneaker atmosphere. Now my mother or grandmother could walk onto a certain block and see various magazines that cover the culture.



A preview of some 2006 JB Classics designs



Keith Hufnagel in the stockroom of the HUF store on Hayes Street, SF, with two of his custom Nikes in the foreground

KEITH HUFNAGEL
Owner, HUF store
San Francisco, CA
www.hufsf.com

Are there certain colorways or styles you're known for?

HUF green is our color; it's the color of our bags, the vinyl on our windows, and we use it in all our clothing. It even has a PMS [Pantone Matching System] code. And with San Francisco, everyone affiliates it with the SF Giants colors, which are black and orange. We use those colors a lot, but we're not claiming them.

What was the inspiration behind that?

Pretty much every shoe we've done—except the Air Max and the Vans we've got coming out—has a story behind it. We are based out of San Francisco so a lot of our stories come from San Francisco. The [Nike x HUF Gold Digger Trainer 1 SBs] was based on gold mining and the Barbary Coast. The mesh on the toe resembles what they use when they pan for gold—how they're shifting the dirt around. Then there's gold underneath the mesh, then heavily stressed-out leather. There's a painted sole that represents gold dust, and it's also in the 49er colors, which are brown, maroon, and gold. There's also the sickle and ax on the side of it to represent mining with the SF logo. The Nike Dunk SBs we did had tie-dye on them because of [the] Haight-Ashbury [district] and the hippies and tie-dye being so big out here. We looked into doing them as a vegan shoe, but we ended up going with cracked leather because it looked really nice. The tie-dye was black, red, and orange, which represented San Francisco as well.

What's the most limited shoe you've done?

The Air Max 1 we did with Nike that had our logo and the SF skyline embroidered on the back. [That's known as] a 'hyper strike': 24 pairs specially done for one person or store, usually with their logo embroidered somewhere and in a special box.

What is your favorite shoe that someone else has done?

The Jordan IV that Undf'd did. Pretty much no one is allowed to touch Jordans at all, so to do one is pretty awesome. Jordan has such a following and they really don't retro their shoes that often—five or 10 years for some pairs. To do a Jordan shows it can be done and Undf'd opened the door to other people doing it, but I don't know if it will ever be done again.



SBTG

Mark Ong takes custom to the nth degree.

Singapore's Mark Ong has become infamous for his steady hands. The 26-year-old—who goes by the name SBTG (pronounced “sabotage”)—painstakingly customizes sneakers by hand, bestowing them with elaborate camouflage, custom textures, rivets, and custom buckles and straps. He is known for working mainly with Nike Air Force Ones and Dunks, but he explains that he's been branching out.

“Recently, I've been customizing a lot of Converse and Vans,” says Ong. “I'm very inspired by skateboarding and I'm trying to bring back the '80s feel. [That time] was the birth of so many things: the first skate shoe, cutting up shoes, putting extra leather on to protect against the grip tape. It's like that time is lost and you can never get it back, so I'm trying to have nostalgia with my shoes.”

SBTG designs aren't authorized, but so far the companies don't seem to mind. Probably because models like the Saigon and the Casablanca are far from mass-produced—it takes Ong anywhere from 15 hours to two days to finish one pair. Though it's a lucrative business, Ong will be turning his perfectionism to his clothing line in 2006. “I am almost always dissatisfied with products that are available, so I have to do something about it—or modify them to suit my needs,” he says. “With Royale Fam, I'm concentrating on getting all the minor details right, down to the label, the stitch, the weave count of the cotton. I just want to make my land everything that I ever dreamed of...” *Chester Wingate*

Pictured above: the Casablanca (top) and the blue Saigon, custom designed for rapper Q-Tip

www.royalefam.com



Gavin Ivester in his Boston, MA, office

GAVIN IVESTER

Senior Vice President & General Manager
of International Footwear, Puma
Boston, MA
www.puma.com

What are some incidences of sports and lifestyle influencing each other? Well, actual track shoes became extremely colorful and a bit outrageous to the point where, three or four years ago in Paris, people were taking track spikes and just putting a sheet of rubber on the bottom so they could wear them on the street. That was the kind of hijacking that we love and we watch for. The boxing boot is another great example. It's a serious product that you can actually box in—we got a great response after we put it out from boxers—but it hit a fashion trend and it was totally because people love to hijack products with an authentic story.

What are the advances in sneaker technology we'll see over the next five years? Lighter weight is a big trend. For 2006, we have a very significant football boot that we're introducing—we were able to achieve the lightest boot possible without compromising stability. We used a carbon fiber plate under the foot to stabilize an extremely lightweight chassis and everything else on the boot is pared down to the minimum. Mechanical cushioning is another big thing—Duocell is our first entry into that. It's a series of hexagonal pillars on the bottom of the shoe that collapse when you step on them. They're hollow but the air inside them is not pressurized—not like an air system (like from Nike), where you have a volume of air or gas trapped inside the shoe and it's at a certain pressure and that's how you're getting your cushioning. We get our cushioning from the properties of the plastic that make up these pillars and they're designed in such a way that they're meant to collapse and spring back. The main area where we saw a difference was in the rate of pronation (flattening of the arch); for us that's an extremely important measure of the success of the running shoe.

What Puma shoes have people responded to the most? If I look at the entire history of the company, it's got to be the Puma Clyde. [It was associated with] Walt Frazier, a famous NBA player from the '70s. We're reintroducing it now. It's a simple, extremely iconic suede Puma shoe that everybody remembers and everybody loves now. One of the most interesting stories is the Mostro, a shoe that's now five years old. [That shoe] really affected the culture of Puma. If you think back to when it came out, there was nothing like it on the market. It was a shoe unlike what people had seen before; because of that, they didn't really understand it or trust it inside the company. It got a really poor forecast before it launched. (If a forecast is bad enough, we'll kill a shoe before we launch it.) Somebody in the company said 'Let's try it anyway. I think it's interesting.' It became our biggest shoe for a few years. It was the powerhouse that helped build Puma to where it is now. It put this healthy self-doubt in the back of everyone's minds. When they see a design they don't understand now, they sit back and think 'I may be looking at the next Mostro,' which is fantastic for promoting originality and design within the company.

What are some products that really inspire you with their design or function? I like really beautiful technical products. I am a huge Apple fan. I just think Apple still gets in right. What I love about Apple is that they're not just pretty products—the soul of Apple is that any product you pick up is easy and understandable. Apple does a great job of automating things that you as a user should never have to worry about in the first place. But I also really like cars and watches, because they're both highly technical and highly aesthetically developed products.



Puma's classic Suede model, which spawned the Clyde design (left), and the Mostro Gemini



Steve "Milky" Mills previewing the Vans Vault spring 2006 line at NYC tradeshow Project

STEVE MILLS
Director of Footwear for Vans
Vault, Classics, & Vans Surf
Santa Fe Springs, CA
www.vans.com



Vans Prison Issue

What are some of your inspirations at Vans? If our inspiration is not coming from skate, music, or surf, then we try to make stuff that we would really wear ourselves, rather than look at what everybody else is doing. For Vans Vault, a lot of our inspiration on the materials side comes from Italy's Lineappelle, a materials tradeshow that caters to the couture industry. On the skate side of things, we're influenced by what our riders are asking for.

What are some colorways or patterns that never got produced? There are some designs that we simply couldn't use because of legal rights. We played with the famous shot of Muhammad Ali knocking out Sonny Liston on a slip-on. We did a Virgin of Guadalupe, and I think that's something that might be made.

Is there a shoe that did better than you ever expected? In the '80s, Vans made shoes for the California prison system. We introduced the Vans Prison Issue about two seasons ago in our Vault line and the heat on that shoe was surprising—it sold out in a couple of weeks.

What are your thoughts on the increase in people being able to customize their own shoes? I'm seeing more creative stuff coming out of people buying shoes and drawing on them than

what's available online. But Vans was 30 years before its time. Back in the late '60s, they had a store in Anaheim where you could go in and pick from canvases, materials, and patterns for shoes, or you could roll in with surf trunks or a sweatshirt and they would make a shoe out of [that material] right there for you.

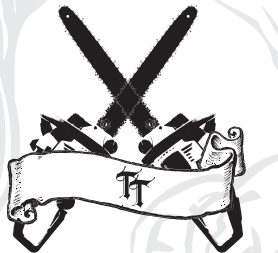
What's in the works for 2006? We are working on a Bermuda triangle with DQM out of New York, HUF in San Francisco, and Kicks Hawaii. For spring, we're bringing something out with Circle Jerks and the Dropkick Murphys, and there's a Descendents shoe that will deliver June 1. For Vans Vault, we're also trying to offer a few pieces of special apparel to the boutique accounts. We worked with [legendary flannel-makers] Pendleton and also California's Hoffman fabrics, one of the original companies that came out with the old school Hawaiian prints.

Are you doing any special shoes for your 40th anniversary? We went back and did the first Vans shoe, [the Era], in its two original colorways: black and a kind of maroon. We also did the first Vans patterns—the Vanosaurus and just the Vans script logo. They're only going to make 1,966 pairs, which represents the year the company was founded.



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adicolor

Adidas takes custom to whole new levels.

In 1983, Adidas introduced adicolor, a suite of white sneakers that came with a grip of waterproof markers, allowing you to personalize your sneakers with anything from rainbows to Jam Master Jay's face. This April, Adidas reintroduces the program with a vengeance, unleashing six models (among them the Superstar, the Century, and the Stan Smith) with a boggling array of customization tools including paints, markers, mini-spray cans, and removable stripes and shoelaces in the program's six signature colors. If you're not of an artistic bent, the company is also rolling out six "palettes" starting March 31. The first wave will be the limited-edition Consortium series, which includes shoes by J. Money from Dave's Quality Meats and Twist Bails Bondsman from HUF. Throughout April and May, adicolor will also release an Artist-customized series (featuring Surface2Air and Keith Haring by Jeremy Scott), a Characters line (for those who like to rock *Tron* and Kermit the Frog graphics), and an Originals line (created in-house). If that isn't enough, the series will also encompass a Brands line—featuring collaborations with imprints such as indie comic publisher Dark Horse and British sneaker site Crooked Tongues—and six New York-themed shoes designed by Bill McMullen (Billions McMillions), each themed around a borough. After pondering all the possible permutations of this project all we can say is... hot damn!

Chester Wingate
Pictured above: adicolor Century model
www.adidas.com



Undftd Founders Eddie Cruz (left) and James Bond

JAMES BOND Owner, Undftd stores Los Angeles, CA www.undftd.com

What is the holy grail of sneakers? Probably the Nike Jordan III and IV. Jordans were the start of this whole thing. At the time they came out, they were the most expensive shoes. It was drug-dealer chic; only they—and the suburban kids with a lot of money—had them. That's why kids were getting jacked for their Jordans. It was a huge status thing and after that, sneakers got all crazed and technical.

Do you think sneaker fiends are placing too much emphasis on how much shoes cost or how limited they are, rather than having a personal style? Price isn't as much of a factor now because kids are balking, and [sneaker trading] gets too expensive unless there are like 10, 12, or 20 pair. But style-wise, kids all want to look like Pharrell [Williams] right now—you've got to have a Bathing Ape or a BBC zip-hoodie, a pair of Dunks, denim, and a trendy t-shirt. It's hard as a retailer to present anything amazing and fresh because kids just don't want it—they want the same stuff.

Is sneaker collecting like the art world, where the rich buy expensive, limited-edition shoes, making it possible for them to be produced? It's the kid who's the trader and the hustler that wants crazy, hard-to-get Nike shoes. The person that has the credit card and the money will buy just Chucks in all the colors; they'll buy Pro-Keds and Jack Purcells. They're not spending \$200 on a Laser Dunk but they'll buy half a dozen pairs of Chuck Taylors so that they're always clean. The kid who is buying that Dunk probably isn't going to wear it; he's going to put in the box and trade it in a few months.

Would you say that there's a "look" to the Undftd collabos? It's always athletic and military at the same time, but premium athletic. We use the best fleece possible on our sweatshirts, the best quality cotton for the t-shirts, the best leather on the shoes... and we make it as technical as we can get. We're concept-driven, but [also] performance- and fashion-driven. [Our stuff] is understated, but hopefully wearable.

What have been your most popular collaborations? The Clerks pack, which our manager at Undftd, Fred, did. We did a great shoe with [Japanese shoe company] Visvim—a moccasin in the colorways of the Jordan IV. The Adidas Considered pack was one of our favorites, and the Jordan IV that we did this past year was good as well.



The Clerks pack Nike Dunks (left) and the Undftd/Visvim moccasin collaboration

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RJD2 & ACEYALONE



WILL THIS OFT-OVERLOOKED MC FINALLY RISE TO THE TOP?

When the Project Blowed label reissued Aceyalone's 1995 solo debut *All Balls Don't Bounce* in 2004, it was issuing a none-too-subtle wake-up call to those who slept on this talented Los Angeles-based MC's music. A founding member of Freestyle Fellowship, Aceyalone has been stuck in the indie ghetto ever since his debut. But with his latest disc, *Magnificent City*, produced by RJD2, he may be poised to move wholeheartedly into the spotlight.

A disc as sprawling and diverse as any urban jungle, *Magnificent City* sees both Acey and RJD2 refining their respective styles while complementing one another's work in a most interesting way. Many of RJD2's beats emulate the clean, crisp style he showcased on *Since We Last Spoke*, pairing cool synths with slinky grooves and guitars. Aceyalone's measured flow and playful delivery, which belie his often-serious statements, fit well against this smoky backdrop.

The duo captures a variety of moods on *Magnificent City*, with Aceyalone touching on topics as diverse as smoking weed ("High Life") and all-consuming greed ("Mooore"). Soulful saxes, organs, and the occasional vamping female vocal sample combine on "Disconnected" to create a classic *Deadringer*-era RJD2 beat, and Acey serves up properly boisterous lyrics to propel the song forward. The music gets intense on "Cornbread, Eddy and Me," a raw track with revved-up synths and a crisp beat that rings like a sledgehammer hitting steel, while "Junior" pulses with blues beats and fluttering flutes. But there's also a slower, more subdued side to this

**ALBUM
REVIEWS
3.06**

ACEYALONE
MAGNIFICENT CITY
Project Blowed-Decon/US/CD

album. "Supahero," which contains Aceyalone's clever pleas for realistic romantic expectations, is a darker, stripped-down affair, obtaining extra mileage from slight, well-placed chord changes and an almost insubstantial guitar sample. As well, short interludes like "A Sunday Mystery," a lightly plucked passage from RJ, help to coolly thread together the thump 'n' bump of "Junior" with "Solomon Jones" just two tracks behind.

The main focus of *Magnificent City* remains Aceyalone's wordplay. While the rapper lyrically bobs and weaves like Ali in his prime, he also demonstrates a keen sense of humor to temper his arrogant boasts. Acey is a talented storyteller who can create vivid images and smartass statements with equal skill (deftly displayed on the character study "Solomon Jones"). Though MF Doom may have cornered the market on esteemed rapper/producer team-ups in the last few years (i.e. Danger Doom and Madvillain), Aceyalone's performance on this disc shows he's also a name that every producer should have in his Rolodex. *Patrick Sisson*



DELTA 5
SINGLES & SESSIONS 1979-81
Kill Rock Stars/US/CD

Along with Gang of Four and The Mekons, the female-fronted, double-bass attack of Delta 5 rounded out a holy trinity that erupted from late '70s Leeds. And as this lovingly crafted collection—complete with liner notes from author Greil Marcus and Mekon Jon Langford—shows, the group more than shouldered its responsibilities. From the Go4-style sharpened guitars and Situationist lyrics to the XTC-like pop of “Anticipation” and the Joy Division-esque warble of “Shadow” (one of three previously unreleased live tracks), Delta 5 might at first come across less like a unique moment in post-punk history and more as the ultimate amalgamation of that era. But that would sell D5 short: more than most of their contemporaries, Delta 5 understood that dance music and punk were not only complementary, but part of the same lineage, that mashing riffs over disco beats was more “appropriate” than “appropriation,” and that Blondie caused more change than Crass ever could. *Justin Hopper*



AARDVARCK
CULT COPY
Rush Hour/NETH/CD

The man behind 2005's best-titled song (“Just Washed That Pig”) comes out from behind the decks of Amsterdam's Rednose District collective to deliver a solid album of techno. Taking his cue from early '90s Detroit, Aardvarck (a.k.a. Mike Kivits) drops gems like the inexorable “Cult Copy 1,” which pairs a robot clavinet with the plodding bass drum of doom, and “Theme Park,” which builds from a crisp breakbeat to chugging four-on-the-floor beats, all wrapped in gauzy shreds of synths. There's nothing quite as catchy as “Pig,” but *Cult Copy* is still a worthy dream for a machine. *Peter Nicholson*

DANIEL AGUST
SWALLOWED A STAR
One Little Indian/UK/CD

On the sleeve of his debut solo album, Daniel Agust wears sackcloth hemmed roughly with coarse string. It's presumably a significant statement of aesthetics from the former GusGus frontman, as he distances himself from cherished dancefloor soundtracks and toys with the kind of imagery evoked by epic Icelandic novels like Halldór Laxness' *Independent People*. Backing Agust's voice with strings 'n' FX, *Swallowed A Star* is often lovely, if not quite as gratifying as releases by the singer's past collective. *David Hemingway*

ALIF TREE
FRENCH CUISINE
Compost/GER/CD

Nina Simone opens *French Cuisine*, as Alif Tree makes his devotions clear: Simone's “Plain Gold Ring” is as sophisticated and heart wrenching as jazz will ever be. Alif Tree's minimalist vinyl-crackle-and-warm-beats reworking of that vocal into his own “Deadly Species” shows the Frenchman lovingly crafting acoustic sounds and electronic productions into a seamless, melancholy shuffle. Anna Karina, Shirley Horn, French library music, and Parisian café jazz all get the Alif Tree makeover on an album that would've been as at home in a Truffaut film as on a certain German label of no little renown. *Justin Hopper*

ALOG
CATCH THAT TOTEM! (1998-2005)
Melektronikk/NOR/CD

Can-channeling, Terry Riley wink-winking, and Aphex-aware Norwegian free-jazz superstars (and Rune Grammofon Lynchpins) Alog footnote the stately avant-majesty of their preceding albums with this compendium of unreleased, rare, and remixed work. Alog's approach favors the narrative, apparent in every track's intricacy; the title number—a remix for Swiss band Velma—became a cover of sorts when, upon discovering that they didn't have the proper lyrics, they had to substitute words from an unrelated album. With or without stories or deciphering the liner notes, these are all independently brilliant songs for you to catch. *Brian Paul*

AUTOPHONIC
SLACK
On/NETH/CD

Slack indeed. Eight years after a stellar debut on Djax Up Bitch's DUB sub-label, Sander Borst's scant body of work resembles that of a dissipating cloud cover. A shame, as Autophonic's not-so-sanctimonious take on IDM—where clattering, tactile percussion nuzzles up to deliciously decayed snippets of jazz instrumentation and sinus-shattering bass—proves provocatively lasting in its visceral innovation. Luckily, this deftly curated compilation culls highlights from past releases and throws in five unreleased morsels. An essential selection, but the next record had better be called *Workaholic*. *Brian Paul*

AYATOLLAH
NOW PLAYING
Nature Sounds/US/CD

Unlike his Nature Sounds labelmate Omega One's oft-cinematic debut album, Ayatollah's *Now Playing* features mid-tempo beats that are ideal for smoked-out freestyle sessions. Known for his work with the likes of Mos Def, Last Emperor, and even G-Unit, this NYC beatsmith presents 14 of his favorite beats here—many released for the first time and a few of which you've likely heard, such as the reggae-tinged “Kingston.” These instrumentals are not the most intricate, but amid their simplicity you'll find a wealth of soulful samples and crisp drum patterns. *Max Herman*

B. FLEISCHMANN
THE HUMBUCKING COIL
Morr Music/GER/CD

The mighty Morr imprint has easily wiggled into that tricky nexus between ambient, rock, and electronica, and Bernhard Fleischmann has emerged as one of its definitive artists. Fleischmann's talent lies in his ability to craft sweeping songs; you can feel his rich, melodic creations pulsing and breathing quietly on their own, making them fit just as snugly under a starry night or on a Spacemen 3 remix album. A tremendous loneliness floods *The Humbucking Coil*, from the clean, simple lines on “Sonic Grat” to the whispering “Cain,” which pairs coarse textures with melancholy guitar twangs and soft, broken vocals. *Janet Zou*

PIERRE BASTIEN
POP
Rephlex/UK/CD

Fifty-two-year-old composer/inventor Pierre Bastien wrenches sublime sounds out of automatons built from Meccano parts and catalyzed by electro-motors. He then arranges them into orchestras for highbrow dance troupes and adventurous home listeners. Bastien's m.o. on *Pop* is charmingly warped jazz exotica, like Matthew Herbert remixing a Raymond Scott/Martin Denny collaboration. Most of the tracks possess Herbert's knack for mantra-like rhythms, oddly busy percussion, and proto-electronic explorations through inner space. *Pops*' gently unhinged miniatures wouldn't sound out of place scoring Jan Svankmajer's grotesque, surreal animations. *Dave Segal*

BLACKBIRD
BIRD'S EYE VIEW
Alpha Pup/US/CD

Trite but true, this isn't rap music—it's poetry plus sound, and we're not talking just beats. Paris Zax's backing tracks earn him the front cover credit, as his own instrumental “High Plains Drifter” surprisingly breathes new life into the Ennio Morricone sample. With the mise en scène, Blackbird delivers a succession of stellar performances: from a Tom Waits scruff to the Blaxploitation version of “Travis Bickle.” On “Lessons,” Blackbird slips Bambaataa an Ambien for the “zzz's” and then proceeds to pontificate with a proliferation of P's—and it sure packs a punch. *Daniel Sivek*

BUSH CHEMISTS
RAW RAW DUB
ROIR/US/CD

Dougie Wardrop and Paul Davey, the Bush Chemists, serve up some Baba Root with this one. Dub so potent and organic, if you didn't know it was edited on a computer you would think it came from the genre's golden age. A practical tribute to all that is dubby, “Higher Heights” reaches for Mt. Zion and makes it, while “Oriental Style” recalls the best of Lee “Scratch” Perry and “Symphony Of Dub” contains faithful flourishes of Aswad's “Love/Dub Fire.” *Daniel Sivek*

CHIHEI HATAKEYAMA
MINIMA MORALIA
Kranky/US/CD

The track titles on Hatakeyama's debut alone provide a pretty good hint at what's inside: “Bonfire on the Field,” “Granular Haze,” and “Beside a Well” all invoke a sense of environment. Throughout the disc, moods, scenes, and feelings emerge, and the results are warm and free-floating. But while the layered tones are beautiful, the album overall could use more variety. The guitars underlying “Swaying Curtain in the Window” and “Towards a Tranquil Marsh,” for example, give both tracks a distinctiveness that the disc misses in other places. There's a line, after all, between subtle and soporific. *Luciana Lopez*

COPY
MOBIUS BEARD
Audio Dregs/US/CD

PANTHER
YOURSELF
Fryk Beat/US/CD

Mobius Beard, the debut record from Portland's Copy (a.k.a. Marius Libman), is an 8-bit masterpiece of fuzzy synth harmonies and innovative beats. Bustling with jovial melody and human frailty, it fits in well on E*Rock's Audio Dregs label. Panther, who shares vocal duties in The Planet The, is more like a burnt speaker cone in Portland's boom-box. The first release for the newly founded Fryk Beat imprint (a project of Eric Johnson and E*Rock), Panther's *Yourself* places tortured soul lyrics over minimal beats and art-damaged synths. Both records burst with thoughtful experimentation, but its *Mobius Beard* that begs repeated listening. *Josiah Hughes*

DARONDO
LET MY PEOPLE GO
Luv 'n Haight/US/CD

This reissue-and-then-some offers songs heretofore only known to crate diggers lucky enough to own all three highly prized Darondo 45s. It also includes three additional tunes—originally recorded in the SF soul man's late '60s heyday—fleshed out by the singer and Bing Ji Ling. The results are positively stunning, from the quasi-political title track to the tender post-coital ballad “Didn't I” (astutely picked by Gilles Peterson for his *Digs America* comp). Darondo proves reminiscent of an early Sly Stone—not to mention a precursor of Babyface and Rafael Saadiq—yet with a unique, hella funky flavor all his own. *Eric K. Arnold*

DJ OLIVE
HEAPS AS, LIVE IN TASMANIA
theAgriculture/US/CD

In his CD's inner sleeve, Gregor Asch features portraits of faces smeared on dirty walls that all resemble those of clubgoers one might quickly encounter in a crowd yet never see again. As DJ Olive, he captures that situation with a recording of his May 2005 Australian performances. The tracks stick to his sunlit *Bodega* formula of fusing dub, Latin funk, rocksteady, and hip-hop, and the results suit any basement party with no breathing space. “Heaps As” has a Latin-jazz piano melody

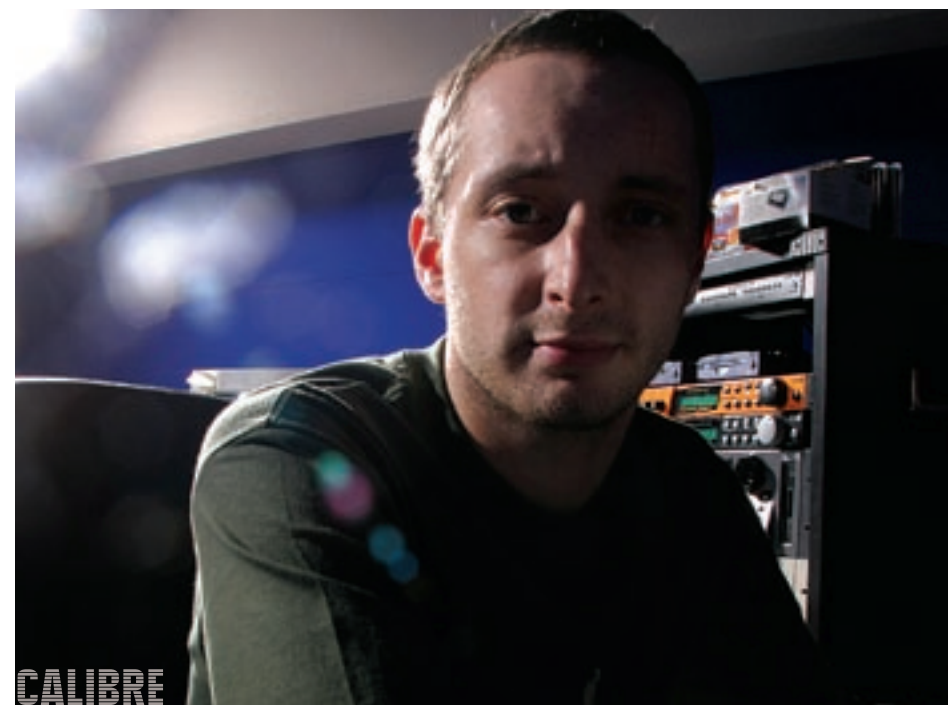
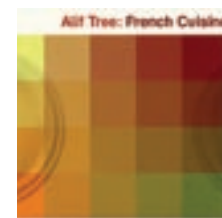
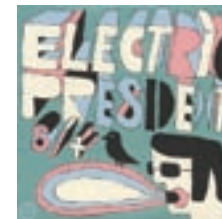
that chases the ghosts of past loves in the streets. “Sub Bass Commandante” deftly scrambles the “Funky Drummer” break with an ace riddim. Despite its fun, the music grows rather monotonous over an hour. Best drunk one shot at a time. *Cameron Macdonald*

TOD DOCKSTADER
AERIAL #2
Sub Rosa/BEL/CD

After a four-decade absence, Tod Dockstader returned with *Aerial #1*, one of 2005's finest albums. The *musique concrète* pioneer's lifelong fascination with shortwave radio transmissions drove him to record over 90 hours of such noises to digitally sculpt into music. The results are just as haunting and vaporous as the voices and songs that fill the sky. The second installation of the *Aerial* series has more ominous drone-scapes, like the sublime ballad “Wah.” However, there are some jagged microtones that hinder the album's momentum. Nonetheless, Dockstader still has a sharp ear for the constant music from which he extracted just 90 hours. *Cameron Macdonald*

ELECTRIC PRESIDENT
ELECTRIC PRESIDENT
Morr Music/GER/CD

Combining crackling, textured laptop sounds with stripped-down indie rock, Ben Cooper and Alex Kane have a formula that, on paper, is destined to work. Translated to sound, however, the results are mixed. Though the electronic aspects are up to snuff, they can only conceal Cooper's amateurish songwriting for so long. From the Modest Mouse-like chorus of “Good Morning, Hypocrite” to the redundant lyrics of “Grand Machine No. 12,” *Electric President* is reduced to a good idea wallowing in mediocrity. *Josiah Hughes*



CALIBRE
SECOND SUN
Signature/UK/CD

If Calibre's 2001 debut, *Musique Concrete*, was a sketchbook of raw and undefined drum & bass compositions, then his sophomore release, *Second Sun*, is his portfolio of intricately detailed, well-constructed, and fully realized pieces. From the dramatic opener “Bullets,” featuring the heavenly vocals of Diane Charlemagne, one quickly grasps how Dominic Martin has musically matured his loose ideas into complete masterpieces. The tantalizing string arrangements on the title track, the rolling boom-bap of “Go Back to Go Forward,” and the rub-a-dub skank of “Kiya” find Martin invoking the simplest pleasures with the subtlest touches. Sprinkle in the breezy house grooves of “Don't Watch This” and “These Few” and the alluring downtempo number “Drinnably,” and you have an album that gets better with every listen. *Ryan Romana*



JUKKA ESKOLA

JUKKA ESKOLA

Free Agent/FIN/CD

This is jazz on the cool-out tip—but when you grab your pipe and slippers, make sure your kicks won't slip on the dancefloor. Five Corner's Quintet/Nu Spirit Helsinki/Teddy Rok 7 trumpet man Jukka Eskola steps up center stage with a debut long-player of choice club jazz. Joints like "1974," with its finger-snapping melody, and the rim-shot bumping "Buttercup," with its rootsy Rhodes and upright bass interplay, work equally well for cocktail swillers on the prowl or lounge lizards lurking in the living room. Whatever the locale, Eskola's fine horn work shines through, from dark and smoky on "Last Breath" to bright and wild on the funky "Duudamdej." *Peter Nicholson*



FANTAN MOJAH

HAIL THE KING

Greensleeves/UK/CD

Hail the King is a promising debut from a Jamaican artist who helped bring roots music back to the dancehall. Much in the spirit of the Maroons—the formerly enslaved Africans, who in the 1700s successfully defeated the British colonialists near his St. Elizabeth hometown—Fantan speaks with revolutionary zeal about oppression on tracks like "Corruption" and "Murderer." On his first single, "Hungry," which topped the Jamaican charts, Fantan voices the sufferers' plight over the Invasion riddim, a clever reworking of The Tennors' 1967 Studio One classic "Pressure and Slide." Fans of Capleton and Clement "Sir Coxsone" Dodd will definitely appreciate Fantan's melodic sound and righteous fury. *James Mayo*



COLD CUT

SOUND MIRRORS

Ninja Tune/UK/CD

On their first album in nearly a decade, all Coldcut wants to do is hold up a mirror. *Sound Mirrors* finds the duo of Matt Black and Jonathan More stepping to the side while guest rappers, singers, and poets lead the songs and deliver the message. "Somewhere on Earth/Little kids teach themselves how to make a whistling sound/To imitate bombs dropping," mutters Andrew Broder (a.k.a. Fog). Soweto Kinch bears witness to Western governments acting like mafia dons while delivering relief to developing countries on the brilliant "Aid Dealer," and Saul Williams writes a touching letter to "Mr. Nichols," a Faust-like character who sells his soul to Wall Street. But given that Coldcut is part of breakbeat's vanguard, their production here—which ranges from dirty electro to cinematic orchestration and bhangra-hop—seems a bit flat. Their righteous message is well put, but could be delivered with a bit more spark. *Cameron Macdonald*

THE GOSSIP

STANDING IN THE WAY OF CONTROL

Kill Rock Stars/US/CD

On this dance-punk trio's fascinating previous effort *Movement*, vocalist Beth Ditto sang like a banshee clawing the inside of her tortured soul clean. But throw Fugazi legend Guy Picciotto behind the mixing desk and all of sudden Ditto turns into a disco chanteuse, repressing her cathartic screams to let her inner sultry diva take charge of the dancefloor. No matter; Ditto and company still remain some of Kill Rock Stars' finest noisemakers, and thumpers like "Jealous Girls," "Keeping You Alive," and "Listen Up!" coolly keep The Gossip's vibe alive and kicking. *Scott Thill*

TETSU INOUE

YOLO

DiN/UK/CD

It's been said that the brain is most alert during a lightning storm. Tetsu Inoue's music mimics that environment—his digital snaps and tones move like the ions that thicken the air. Inoue and other post-techno mavericks have long bathed in a digital ether where organ drones flow like a bloodstream and glitches imitate artificial intelligence correcting itself. *Yolo* breaks no new ground, but Inoue's work is far from cliché. The hymnal "Flow" soundtracks life awakening at dawn, while "Curve" chases drizzling microtones with a net. And within the raw data crunching, there's a constant, meditative grace. *Cameron Macdonald*

JAFROSAX

NEW STANDARD OF THE FUTURE

Pantone/UK/CD

Gav Smith's Pantone label continues to showcase some of Japan's future jazz talent with the debut from sax man Kaz Kazuta. Produced by fellow Japanese residents (and label-mates) Yukihiro Fukutomi and Jazztronik, the album starts off strong with the appealing, Latin-tinged "In The Morning," crooned smoothly by Vikter Duplaix. From there, the styles volley between broken beat, ambient, and jazzy; Gonky's Miss Yukimi features on a couple of tracks, as does Japan's Studio Apartment and Faze Action. Doubtful that it'll be mistaken for forging a "new standard," but it's still a cut above. *Velanche*

JEL

SOFT MONEY

Anticon/US/CD

Anticon's long been a standard-bearer for innovative hip-hop, and with this full-length from co-founder Jel, the label continues that tradition. To be fair, though, Jel's album spans more than just hip-hop. The album slices and dices genres throughout, and the music sounds all the better for it. He showboats his flow on the opener, "To Buy a Car," a collection of commercial snippets and anti-materialistic messages, but "All Day Breakfast" sounds like nothing so much as a lushly beautiful landscape translated into music. *Luciana Lopez*

JUDITH JUILLERAT

SOLILOQUY

Shitkatapult/GER/CD

We were all shocked last year when this unassuming mom of two from some podunk town in France won Björk's remix contest with her slow-burn redux of "Army of Me." That track ("al(r)mour," included here) makes an appearance alongside 12 other equally menacing lullabies on *Soliloquy*, Judith Juillerat's first album. Juillerat drapes her wet-velvet vocals over oceanic synth washes and intricately syncopated techno crinkles, speaking volumes out of the silences embedded in haunting pieces like "vol-au-vent." Her sonic imagination curls like a piece of antiquated filigree, Victorian in its restrained ornamentation. An assured debut overall. *Anna Balkrishna*

JUNK SCIENCE

FEEDING EINSTEIN

Embedded/US/CD

As evidenced by the track "House Wigger"—on which Baje One announces, with his self-effacing tongue firmly in cheek, "Blah-blah-blah/Mike is a wigger/I'm just trying to make my worldview a little bigger"—the MC has a scope that defies any stereotype of white rappers. On *Feeding Einstein*, the Brooklynite's fluid rhymes seamlessly fit DJ Snafu's earthy production, a style that has the nose of a crate digger yet sticks to the traditional kick-snare thunk. "The Blaze-O" fades out with sublime porch-lit funk while "Speaking (Same Ol' Same)" flows on a fine, 3 a.m. jazz tip. Despite their tacky cover art and an album title that screams camp, Junk Science comes correct with a no-bullshit attitude. *Cameron Macdonald*

KERO

KEROLOGISTICS

Neo Quiji/UK/CD

Known for pummeling persons worldwide with his graphic design fugue of 0s and 1s—not to mention a vast discography spread across labels like Bpitch Control, Sender, Shitkatapult, and his own Detroit Underground—Kero suitably slows things down here for a subdued English label. *Kerologistics* isn't entirely the backing track for the onramp to Sleepytime, as Kero's ever-complex arsenal of hiccupping rattletrap sounds claustrophobically coats every digestible space of sound. Lackluster in its entirety, Kero's skill for dark-side computer trickery is probably best suited for sublimating the dancefloor. *Brian Paul*

TALIB KWELI

RIGHT ABOUT NOW

Koch/US/CD

Let's face it: Talib Kweli puts out more mixtapes and albums per year than most consumers can keep up with. But this new "sucka free" mix CD is certainly one of his most worthwhile releases yet. While many fans and critics were on the fence about his last album, *The Beautiful Struggle*, this brisk, 12-track disc features little to be uncertain about. Kweli calls attention with his articulate flow as he uncovers his long trek through the record industry ("Right About Now") and even pleads to the missing-in-action Lauryn Hill to step back to the mic ("Ms. Hill"). *Max Herman*

CHONCEY LANGFORD

THE ENTHUSIAST

Woodson Lateral/US/CD

As one-third of Seattle's Lamplighter, Langford helped to forge one of the Northwest's most diverse and interesting IDM albums of the decade with 2003's *A Three Point Perspective*. Since moving to LA, he's focused on solo production. *The Enthusiast* finds him exploring techno's dubbier and glitchier strata with off-kilter inventiveness, while maintaining his IDM pedigree ("Max Ernst" and "Harvey Milk" team with unpredictable pinball rhythms and murmuring hospital-equipment sounds). Langford also understands the value of concision, maximizing stimulation in 39 minutes over 12 tracks. With one foot on the tech-house dancefloor, the other in the tonal tomfoolery of Mille Plateaux, Langford embarks on a promising solo career. *Dave Segal*

LITTLE ROY

CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH

Pharos/UK/CD

Little Roy recorded several reggae classics during the '60s and '70s, re-surfacing in London in the mid-1990s to cut the *Longtime* album with Adrian Sherwood and *More From a Little* with the lesser-known Lion outfit. His latest effort comes from Pharos, a label rekindling London's live reggae scene. The strongest numbers are those that are least familiar: the censorious "Membership Card," "Bomazee," and "False Talk" are all delivered in Roy's distinctive style, and, although the few cover tunes that round out the set pale by comparison, the album is suitably competent overall. *David Katz*

BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS

AFRICA UNITE: THE SINGLES COLLECTION

Island/US/CD

What can be said of a new single-CD collection from the man who, besides James Brown, had more impact on music worldwide than anyone else in the past 40 years? What does another CD with "Get Up Stand Up" and "One Love" achieve? It's better (read: larger) than the frat-party standard, *Legend*, there are (dull) remixes by the ubiquitous Will.i.am and Ashley Beedle, and even a great newly discovered track ("Slogans"). But all in all, *Africa Unite* seems like just another easy answer to one of the deepest questions in 20th century music. *Justin Hopper*

MODILL

MIDNIGHT GREEN

EV Records/US/CD

Racecar, one-half of Chicago hip-hop duo Modill, ain't shy about smoking on "Send Me to Bliss." For him, torching up is all about achieving clarity, illumination, and restoration—all qualities imparted by *Midnight Green*, Modill's magnificent debut album. Producer K-Kruz lays down seamless tracks that transform like some type of mutant Prefuse 73 gene, bouncing between rich, smoky funk workouts, sly, Native Tongue-style smoothness, and shifty beats that hiccup like a Madlib joint. Racecar displays a similar wandering genius, threading dozens of different, dense lines through his partner-in-crime's production. Like Racecar's favorite herb, this disc should be sampled and passed between friends. *Patrick Sisson*

THE NATIONAL TRUST

KINGS AND QUEENS

Thrill Jockey/US/CD

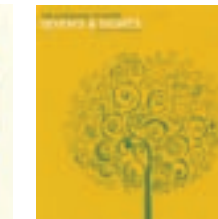
The National Trust's sophomore release, *Kings and Queens*, is an identity crisis from bygone eras. The cover image, in which The Trust takes a kung fu stance against bright pink elevator doors, is pseudo-'60s pop art, and the lyrics and melodies toggle back and forth between the '80s and '90s; influences influences of Colder ("Elevators"), *Purple Rain*-era Prince ("Show and Tell"), and a dash of *90210*s hip DJ David Silver ("Canday's Way") also make appearances. Hip shaking and pelvis pumping may ensue, but the lack of direction from track to track is more likely to just furrow eyebrows. *Megan Martin*

THE NOSTALGIA 77 OCTET

SEVEN'S & EIGHT'S

Tru Thoughts/UK/CD

Recorded live at London's legendary venue The Jazz Cafe, *Seven's & Eight's*—a near full-on jazz effort—exquisitely captures the essence of a young band in bloom, led by N77 himself, Ben Lumdin. Throughout, beautiful melodic textures embody a time gone by, yet nod confidently toward the future. Should you need a little fix of electronics, the elegant 18-minute epic "The Hope Suite" is included, previously available only on vinyl. All in all, this is quite a package from quite a talented outfit. *Velanche*



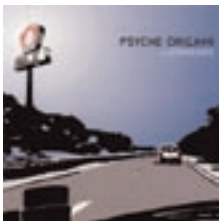
CAURAL

CAURAL

REMEMBERING TODAY

Mush/US/CD

A collection of unreleased material recorded after 2002's full-length *Stars on My Ceiling* (Chocolate Industries), *Remembering Today* provides a glimpse into the tonal meiosis of Chicago-bred, New York-based producer Zachary Mastoon (a.k.a. Caural). Caural's latest is an anthology of fuzzy memories though not fuzzy logic—these 13 session outtakes are both nebulous and distinctly contemplative. The bleary, corner-of-the-eye pirouette of these shambolic, sepia-toned memoirs places Caural as a kitsch-free contemporary of LA anachronist Daedelus, while the record's dovetailing, soft-focus snaps are akin to those of Prefuse 73. But Caural's willowy, huddled, dream-pop/mope-hop exudes its own signature sway, as refracted rustles and wispy melodies flicker atop blunted stutter. *Remembering Today's* stereotyped vignettes taper off more than resolve, but there's cumulative warmth in the embossed ridges and static-strewn hollows of Caural's pastel-dappled haze. *Tony Ware*



PEPITO
THE NEW WORLD
 Static Discos/MEX/CD
CARRIE
HONEY BLUE STAR
 Static Discos/MEX/CD

A snapshot of the Mexico we hear on new Static Discos releases from Carrie (a.k.a. Laura Becerra) and Pepito (Ana Machado and José Márquez): strong and sultry women sit at sidewalk cafés with manic men in dark glasses, poring over laptop studios and pencil-scratched English lyrics. On their new albums—alternately, darkly poppy melancholy (Carrie’s *Honey Blue Star*) and melancholically dark pop (Pepito’s *The New World*)—these artists reveal Mexico to be on the vanguard of fusing traditional, hummable pop songwriting with glitch-and-blur electronics. Despite her relative inexperience, Carrie sneaks out the star, thanks to a biting wit and a fluidity of songwriting that belies her short career. *Justin Hopper*



P.O.S.
AUDITION
 Rhymesayers/US/CD

Give him dap, because he’s got ambition. P.O.S. has not only indirectly taken on the nickname of De La Soul’s Posdnuous, but also revises the legend’s entire “I Am I Be” for his own “De La Souls,” which features the ironic chant “No one will ever be like me” from the Bouncing Souls’ Greg Attonito. How’s that for postmodern layering? Sure, the cat has balls and cameos, including appearances by Slug and The Hold Steady’s Craig Finn; he’s also got noise, on “Half-Cocked Concepts” and the self-explanatory “Stand Up (Let’s Get Murdered).” So call it square and give the new jack’s piece a chance. *Scott Thill*



DANDY JACK

DANDY JACK AND THE JUNCTION SM
LOS SIETE CASTIGOS
 Perlon/GER/CD

Perlon, those purveyors of the most serious of minimal techno, lighten up here with a positively mischievous release by Dandy Jack (Chilean expat Martin Schopf). On *Los Siete Castigos*, Schopf teams up with Swiss DJ Sonja Moonear, recalling and revising the stripped-down Latino micro-swing of his earlier collaborations with Ricardo Villalobos. The bouncy squiggles and congas of “Globe Trottel” recall childhood romps after the ice-cream trucks of yesteryear, while “Arabs in the Desert” is so playfully percussive it begs for audience participation on an upturned plastic water bucket. The quirkiness loses some luster about two-thirds of the way through the album, but it’s a fun romp while it lasts. *Anna Balkrishna*

PSYCHE ORIGAMI
THE STANDARD
 ArcTheFinger/US/CD

It’s not difficult to deduce what fuels Psyche Origami’s latest: the Atlanta MC/double-DJ indie combo’s sophomore full-length loosely centers on filling-station imagery. If the framework was explicitly extrapolated, oil could offer a vehicle for viciously, viscosously pointed observations. Except, using a car metaphor, this ride’s almost too glossy. Cerebral but without cortical crags, the knotty-yet-noddin’ verses hug Native Tongues-meets-Main Source-style buoyant funk almost too harmoniously, blending and breezing by. Psyche Origami is definitely heading towards something, when they could be more aggressively driving at it. *Tony Ware*

RADIQ
TOMORROW’S QUEST
 Logistic/FRA/CD

I.A. BERICOCHEA
SUEÑO
 Rojo/ITA/CD
 Radiq (Japan’s Yoshihiro Hanno, a.k.a. Multiphonic Ensemble) strays from Logistic’s minimal-techno template into questing future jazz, disjointed hip-hop with clotted French rapping, and luxurious dub featuring dulcet-toned Paul St. Hilaire. *Tomorrow’s Quest* is a sporadically brilliant, ambitious effort that should appeal to fans of 4hero, Prefuse 73, and Rhythm & Sound. By contrast, I. A. Bericochea’s deep and cloistered minimal techno makes the Chain Reaction catalog sound like a bunch of E-addled rave anthems. The Madrid producer’s sound is monochromatic yet utterly captivating. The follow-up to 2003’s *Rajo*, *Sueño* puts a gentler, muted spin on Porter Ricks’ stoically aquatic and hypnotic dub techno and the Voigt brothers’ metronomic, metallic pummel. Essential. *Dave Segal*

RICHIE SPICE AND JAH CURE
TOE 2 TOE VOL. IX
 Jet Star/UK/CD

If you’ve been waiting for the next Gregory Isaacs and Dennis Brown, look no further than Richie Spice and Jah Cure. Both have earned reputations as being among Jamaica’s most inspirational artists, and these spearheads of current reggae offer “nuff liviny on their *Toe 2 Toe* album. This UK release offers several tracks unavailable on their US LPs to date, and all of them are winners. Each singer has crafted a distinct style; Spice’s trademark *na na nas* and falsetto trills, and Cure’s chant-like utterances mesh well together, resulting in a smooth-flowing album that delivers contemporary roots with no roadblocks. Even though the two never team up in combination, this blazing set is indeed big all around. *Eric K. Arnold*

URSULA RUCKER
MA’AT MAMA
 !K7/US/CD

Ursula Rucker, the *Supa Sista* whose poetry melds so perfectly with dancefloor riddims, has always been simultaneously part of a movement and a singular voice. On *Ma’at Mama*, the mother of four is more willing than ever to say what a lot of American mothers—of soldiers in Iraq or soldiers in the streets—have been thinking about her favorite subjects: sexism (in hip-hop, politics, wherever), racism, and imperialism among them. But more so than ever, Rucker does it with a musicality and straight-up class missing from much of the genre. Rucker’s songs once screamed, “Listen!” On *Ma’at Mama*, they simply know you will. *Justin Hopper*

SAINT ETIENNE
TALES FROM TURNPIKE HOUSE
 Savoy Jazz/US/CD

Eclipsing the blandness of their last two studio albums, Saint Etienne’s seventh is a dazzling return to the idyllic ‘60s pop melodies of *So Tough* (“Sun in My Morning”) and the infectious disco of *Tiger Bay* (“A Good Thing”). They spin the mundane—shopping, arguing with a lover—into daydreamed moments, as when singer Sarah Cracknell stares down the culture of news-generated fear in the exquisite “Side Streets.” “Stars Above Us” finds her dancing on rooftops to the most memorable hook since Stardust’s “Music Sounds Better With You”—proof that they’ve not lost their masterful ability to convey the excitement of youth, decadence, and your first time... on the dancefloor. *Rachel Shimp*

SOOTHSAYERS
TANGLED ROOTS
 Red Earth/UK/CD

Soothsayers is a London-based collective that blends the pulsating rhythms of Afrobeat with the sonic adventurousness of dub and urban jazz; *Tangled Roots* references the divergent elements of this complex hybrid. This is deeply satisfying music, in which

African rhythms are filtered through the prism of dub, complemented by inspiring guest spots from Maxi Jazz of Faithless, Roots Manuva’s reggae vocalist Rikki Rankin, “blu funk” pioneer Keziah Jones, veteran South African guitarist Lucky Ranku, and Adesose Wallace of AfroCelt Sound System. Due to the band’s accomplished musicianship and overall originality, the result is highly compelling. *David Katz*

TAPE
RIDEAU
 Hapna/SWE/CD

Tape’s third release, *Rideau*, changes from swampy to serene, as if scraping fingernails through the dirt only to find a rushing stream underneath. There is a distinct flow to the album, which blends a variety of mariachi-sounding acoustics with electronic blips and soft, resonating echoes. Produced by German musician Marcus Schmickler in Cologne, *Rideau* leaves listeners craving the deep calm and reflection that only a new year—or a refreshing new record—can bring. *Megan Martin*

THA ALKAHOLIKS
FIREWATER
 Waxploitation-Koch/US/CD

No one’s ever accused Tha Liks of being overly conscious, and this, their fifth and last album, certainly won’t be the disc that changes any preconceived notions. Hip-hop’s gleeful hedonists sign off with the signature style that’s kept them popular since their 1993 debut; this one’s a boozy collection of party tracks with an undercurrent of intelligence and wit. Tha Alkaholiks revel in their reputation, as evidenced by referencing their self-proclaimed “West Coast sip-hop” on “Chaos.” Any guesses as to what “Party Ya Ass Off” is about? The party might be ending, but it’s not over quite yet. *Luciana Lopez*

TEAM LG
THE WAY WE DO IT
 Kennington/UK/CD

Strung together with the aid of a rickety old sampler and a dusty four-track, *The Way We Do It* is the intimate, homespun, and unabashedly heartfelt debut effort from the now separated couple of Mr. L and Little G. Like an aural scrapbook quietly testifying to the brief convergence of two lives, the album runs the arc of a relationship, opening with a dewy flutter and closing with a vaporous lament. Far more visceral than voyeuristic, listening to Team LG’s gentle offering feels like sitting in a vacated house and running your fingers over every crease in a blanket that used to wrap warmly and snugly around the abode’s two former inhabitants. *James Jung*

TEST ICICLES
FOR SCREENING PURPOSES ONLY
 Domino/UK/CD

On their buzzed-to-death Domino debut, the three young Brits in Test Icicles create democratically cacophonous sound. Each song is a squealing gas fire of hardcore intensity and horror-punk braggadocio. But within seconds, the seemingly straightforward (read: meat-headed) tunes burn to the ground, revealing curious but confident shards of post-punk and beat-heavy faux-hop. What the band lacks in polish, it makes up for in zeal, with 15 relentless battles between vocalist Rory Aggwelt’s piercing bleat, fat, sequenced drums, and the metallic ghost story his carefully coiffed compatriots weave. *Robbie Mackey*

THE TIMEWRITER
PAINTBOX
 Plastic City/GER/CD

In 2002, Jean F. Cochois (a.k.a. The Timewriter) produced a lush, stirring masterpiece, the oft-overlooked *Diary of a Lonely Sailor*. But Cochois’ fourth LP for Plastic City offers what he’s better known for: the deep, atmospheric tech-house that has come to define that label’s sound. The club-oriented *Paintbox* doesn’t really compare to *Diary*’s emotional scope, but it’s enjoyable in its own right. “Reachin’ Out,” souped up with Cochois’ bouncy synth licks, is a love letter to early ‘90s deep house, while “Room of a Million Rainbows” sounds like a throaty ‘80s pop ballad that could inspire serious tongue-jousting sessions. *Janet Tzou*

TRIO MOCOTO
BELEZA! BELEZA!! BELEZA!!!
 Ziriguiboom/BEL/CD

Brazil’s Trio Mocoto has been rockin’ steady since way back in the 1960s. Influenced heavily by American soul and rock—while always blending their native touches into the mix—the formative genres all come to light on *Beleza! Beleza!! Beleza!!!*. The production is a bit too slick, but the musicians are tight and the energy spirited. Even

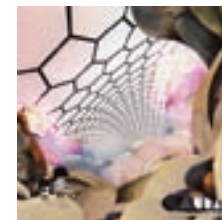
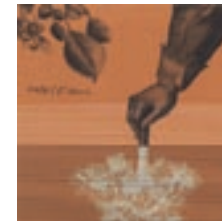
when things get to be a bit too poppy, the disc is too lively to cast aside; it never takes itself too seriously, acting as a worldly diversion from what ails thee. *Velanche*

USKE ORCHESTRA
NIKO ET LA BERLUE
 Sonig/GER/CD

What good is the use of abstraction if the result is so esoteric only the creators have an inkling of an idea about what’s been created? At his most chaotic, even Frank Zappa retained some semblance of rhythm. There is nothing remotely rhythmic or melodic on *Niko Et La Berlue*. The entire record plays out like a soundtrack to *Poltergeist* in the Balkans, relying on the inane to propel odd time signatures, babies chanting, tiny pianos, and the occasional horn. By the middle of the first song, the record becomes laughably unbearable; 11 more songs and all laughter is gone. *Derek Beres*

WILLIAM ORBIT
HELLO WAVEFORMS
 Sanctuary/UK/CD

Too often, ambient equals snoozy, but in the case of über-producer William Orbit, ambient denotes a range of sounds. On this, his first solo album since 2000, Orbit shows his typical keyboard-heavy style while creating a varied disc. He nods to his previous works with “Humming Chorus” (taken from *Madame Butterfly*) while tracks like “Spiral” (featuring vocals from Kenna and UK girl group Sugababes), with its texture and moodiness, lean more toward pop. Though he’s perhaps heavy on the spacey noises, it’s easy to see why everyone from Madonna to U2 keeps his number handy. *Luciana Lopez*



SUPER NUMERI

SUPER NUMERI
THE WELCOME TABLE
 Ninja Tune/UK/CD
THE ENOCHIAN WAY
 Counter/JPN/CD

Imagine Frank Zappa teaming up with a host of Aborigine percussionists and creating extended jams of the 20-minute-plus variety, and you’d begin to have an idea of what Super Numeri’s distinctively bizarre blend of prog and Krautrock sounds like. These self-proclaimed occultists from Liverpool take psychic matter and twist it into a dynamic collage of primal beauty and warfare. *The Welcome Table* finds the band subtly brushing through heavy, almost tribal drumming as hordes of manic guitar, basslines, and samples push the songs from one dimension to the next. *The Enochian Way*, on the other hand, is as obscure as the Japanese label that released it. A mixtape of sorts, compiled by Super Numeri, this peculiar collection travels through tracks by artists from Brigitte Bardot to Yoko Ono to Little Richard, leaving plenty of room for the mythical masters to cut up and paint each composition blood red with their potent blend of feedback and noise. All hail psychedelia! *Fred Miketa*

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SVEN VÄTH

COMP REVIEWS

SVEN VÄTH: IN THE MIX—THE SOUND OF THE SIXTH SEASON

Cocoon/GER/CD

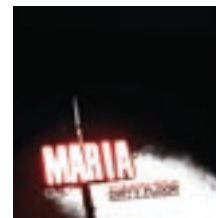
MUNK: GOMMA GANG 3

Gomma/GER/CD

PETER GRUMMICH: CLUB MARIA

Berlin-DIRTY FLOOR

Shitkatapult/GER/CD



CHAOTIC DANCEFLOORS CORRUPT THE LAND OF ORDER.

Though much of the attention paid to German electronic music recently has fallen toward the minimal end of the spectrum, there's definitely more to the land of beer gardens and bratwurst than sleekly angular machine funk. Three recent mixes from the Teutonic nation showcase a more chaotic vision of the dancefloor—from the pumping frenzy of Sven Väth to the disco-ball rock of Munk to the appropriately titled *Dirty Floor* mix by Peter Grummich, things are not as neat and tidy as record store clerks and journalists may desire.

Sven Väth, erstwhile owner of the most ill-advised haircut in DJ-dom, has enjoyed an almost absurdly long and multivalent career in clubland, and his new double disc for his Cocoon label turns yet another page. The second disc finds Väth trying his hand at mixing the minimal sounds of Isolée and Peter M. Kersten (in both his Sten and Lawrence guises) in an enjoyable, if somewhat unremarkable set. The peak-time fare of the first disc ends up being more interesting. From the nine minutes of hissing high end and pounding drums of Adonai Elohim's "2000 and One" that begin the mix to the trance/progressive side of techno (check the plucky synths of Akzidenz Grotesk's "Isbjörn"), Xpress 2's take on Nitzer Ebb, and Gregor Tresher's throbbing "Still," Väth romps unashamedly with big-room party tunes.

Gomma Gang 3 is a decidedly more stylish affair—and Munk knows it. The pair of Mathias Modica and Jonas Imbery might be accused of putting us on with the vocoder-and-dizzy-club-girl sample of their "Disco Clown" and the bubble-gum-on-the-shoe electro of Tomboy's "Maggie & Samira," but with ridiculously catchy grooves and some truly wicked tunes, Munk lets us in on the joke—they're laughing with us, not at us. Arch-campiness aside, *Gomma Gang 3* is worth

a spin, if only for the woozy swerve of The Rapture's remix of WhoMadeWho's "Space For Rent" and Ewan Pearson's pulsating take on Midnight Mike's "Hot In The Kitchen," which glistens like a black vinyl apron over bare legs.

If Munk likes disco-ball glitter sprinkled over their techno, Peter Grummich likes his mirrors ground into shards. Take his "The Animal (Das Tier)," its bassline lurching as twisted clockwork scratches up from beneath the mix with a percussive menace—this is hedonism with a chaser of nihilism. Want to test your speakers (or the tolerance of your neighbors)? Turn to the test-tone mayhem of John Starlight's "John's Addiction." Want to see if your new flame really is a freak? See what s/he does when Grummich drops Justin Martin & Sammy Dee's "Swamp Thang," followed by the creaking, crumpled "Marek & Das Stolen Pony" by Dapayk Solo. Barring the unfortunate last track ("T.Y.O.C. Painkillers," an unusual misstep from James T. Cotton which topples into cheesy trance territory), *Dirty Floor* is like the best sex-adventurous, unexpected, and downright filthy—and serves the rest of the world notice that there's nasty good music coming out of the country where the trains run on time. *Peter Nicholson*



FABRICLIVE 25: HIGH CONTRAST

Fabric/UK/CD
If you want pumping, melodic drum & bass, look no further—the man with the wispy brown afro is here to save the day. Hospital Records hotshot High Contrast follows up 2004’s *High Society* with yet another stellar mix in the *Fabriclive* series. Much like High Contrast’s own music, this set is as turns dramatic (London Elekcity’s “Power Ballad”), uplifting (Logistic’s “Life Rhythm”), and hands-in-the-air danceable (Danny Byrd’s “Soul Function”). Thankfully, HC also gets down and dirty, with the breaks of Cyantific’s “Ghetto Blaster” and the dissonant synths of Artificial Intelligence’s “The Big Picture” nicely cutting the sweet, housey style of many tracks. Topping things off with rolling basslines from Blame and crisply chopped drums from Logistix, it’s hard not to call this mix a classic. *Peter Nicholson*



ALL NATURAL INC. ANTHOLOGY, VOL. 1

All Natural/US/CD
Some of Chicagoland’s best MCs and producers call the All Natural Inc. label home and, for the bulk of this compilation, the ANI lineup prove exactly why they’re so respected. From the simple yet playful lyrical styling of Rita J on the PNS-produced “Warm-Up (Exercise)” to the eye-opening tag-team rhymes of The Primeridian on “Raw,” every act proceeds with a fresh approach. Yet the common bond that holds this roster together is that all these artists effortlessly make soulful hip-hop—something that many indie cats continuously fail to do. *Max Herman*



**BECK
GERULITO**

Interscope/US/CD
To tune up *Guero* would require as nonchalant and dexterous an approach as Beck employed to create the original. But somehow the sonic alchemy here, steeped in bossa/mariachi/electro-clashing, results in one of the tightest remix records of any popular artist. Boards of Canada, Beastie Boy Adrock, and Homelife take sharp stabs at re-digitizing the melodious hooks and analog electronics floating inside this LA native’s mind. While it’s a commendable homage, nothing beats Air’s big-synth ‘80s tinkering on “Heaven Hammer (Missing),” which sounds as if it were pulled from the soundtrack of a coming-of-age John Cusack flick. *Derek Beres*

**THE BUG VS. THE ROOTSMAN/RAZOR X PRODUCTIONS
KILLING SOUND**

Rephlex/UK/CD
This long-awaited CD compiles four previously released singles from The Bug and adds six new ones. The MCs are impeccable; some big names (Cutty Ranks, Daddy Freddy), some Bug favorites (He-Man, Warrior Queen), and some powerful and new all make appearances. It’s the massive head-fuck of a record The Bug was hoping to make, drawing from his dancehall, industrial, techno, and dub roots, with waves of joyous distortion mashed up and filtered through gruff-throated politics. The whole thing is topped off with a second CD of versions that drops most vocals and piles on an extra layer of warp and clatter. Mind-melting. *Matt Earp*

CONGOTRONICS 2: BUZZ’N’RUMBLE FROM THE URB’N’JUNGLE

Crammed Discs/BEL/CD-DVD
Konono N°1 kicked off the *Congotronics* series from Brussels-based Crammed Discs, and *Congotronics 2* offers up more mighty Congolese prog-electro boogie. Crammed’s Vincent Kenis recorded and produced the eight indigenous bands featured between the disc and DVD, including Konono N°1 (who have been around since the ‘70s). Electric *likembes* (thumb pianos), giant megaphones, and car parts are further boosted by distorted drums and over-amped guitars, all feeding from traditional African trance roots. And you can dance to it! Krautrockers and guitar god aficionados alike will be blown away by the vibes rebounding from Kinshasa. *Stacy Meyn*

C/O POP FESTIVAL COMPILATION 2005

C/O Pop/GER/CD
In August of 2005, the second installment of the C/O Pop Festival involved over 140 bands and solo artists, who gathered to celebrate electronic music and its impact on pop culture. For those of us too broke to attend, this 23-track double-disc compilation is a tasty glimpse at the variety of talents involved. Including harder-to-find tracks like Telefon Tel Aviv’s remix of Apparat’s “Komponent,” alongside stunning numbers from the likes of Alex Smoke, Ferenc, The MFA, and Ricardo Villalobos, the compilation is a perfect testament to what was surely an amazing festival. *Josiah Hughes*

ROY DAVIS JR.: GET LARGE VOL. 1

Large Music/US/CD
On his first mix CD in six years, Chicago house don Roy Davis Jr. starts out squarely aiming for listeners’ headphones instead of their hips. The BPMs still pump like pistons but Davis has distilled the occasionally harsh edges of four-on-the-floor funk into something as effervescent and fine as champagne. Drawing lines between retro-acid anthems (Kerri Chandler’s “Return 2 Acid”) and warm synths that recall the more streamlined, spiritual side of Detroit techno, Davis has created a subtle but flavorful set of songs. Though it lacks the bite of a stiff shot of amped-up house, *Get Large* is an audio cocktail that works well as a late-night chaser. *Patrick Sisson*

**DJ REVOLUTION AND TOTAL ECLIPSE
DRAFT RADIO, VOL. 1**

Draft/US/CD
Constructed like a radio show, this two-part mix CD sees two of hip-hop’s finest DJs/turntablists blend together current singles from Planet Asia, Bad Seed, Ras Kass, and a few others. While this mix utilizes a novel format, the idea is tainted by machismo-drenched skits, which add nothing but pointless smut. Despite the wasted airtime, there are some high points—like Mos Def and Esthero’s feel-good cut “Summer Time,” and Revolution’s and Total Eclipse’s unequaled scratching abilities. Unfortunately, that’s not quite enough to make this one worth the price of admission. *Max Herman*

DROP THE LIME VS. SYRUP GIRLS: SHOTGUN WEDDING VOL. 4

Violent Turd/NZ/CD
Ghetto-house, gutterbreakz, and other guttural exhalations adhere together like pursed lips suctioning sweat-beaded skin on this “two-sided” coupling of New York producer Drop the Lime and LES DJs Syrup Girls (in the interest of disclosure, half of which is *XLRRR* editor Vivian Host). DTL’s unrelenting 42-minute pitch- and hell-bent dubstep is as condensed and grimy as all five boroughs. Meanwhile, Syrup Girls’ 38 syncopated standout minutes of 4x4 grime, Bmore club, and bubbly bass are viscous yet brisk, splattered with cum-ons and poppin’ off. Muggy and at times almost gun-metal-grim clanging on side A, raunchy and steely strut on side B, *Shotgun Wedding Vol. 4* fires at a crackin’ clip. *Tony Ware*

**JOEY NEGRO & SEAN P: DESTINATION: BOOGIE—CLASSIC
EIGHTIES BOOGIE, SOUL, & ELECTRO-FUNK NUGGETS**

Z Records/UK/CD
The wedgie on the cover girl’s fanny says it all: had you been funkadelically inclined a

few decades ago, you would’ve rollerskated your tuchus off to any of these post-disco or “boogie” ditties. (It’s worth noting that you undoubtedly would’ve also been rollerskating to “Another One Bites The Dust” by Queen.) Some of the rare joints assembled on this compilation are pretty near priceless: WAGB Band’s deliciously swaggering “I Can Get You Over” might be the ultimate funk collector’s anthem, while Mid Air’s electronic hand-clapper “Ease Out” cuts a clear evolutionary path for house music. *Janet Tzou*

**JUNIOR KELLY, BOUNTY KILLA, CAPLETON
THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE BLAZING**

Minor7Flat5/SPA/CD
Every now and again, a reggae album comes along that’s so damn tuff even the Ashlee Simpson fan at work *want a borrows*. And this is one of ‘em. Starring Kelly as the good, Killa as the bad, and Capleton as a surprisingly chilled out *fyah* man, the concept disc is a mix of love songs, *gun pon finger* diatribes, and anti-shitstem tunes done over riddims rookie dancehall acts never get to ride. Question your own sense of decency when Killa’s hypnotic verse on the drum & bass-driven “Hey Yo Yallo” inspires you to pack heat. *Araya Crosskill*

LUAKA BOP REMIX

Luaka Bop/US/CD
Of Luaka Bop’s eminently remixable catalog, only a small portion is represented among the 14 tracks of *Luaka Bop Remix*. While there are some proper triumphs here, by the end of its 66 minutes, fans of the label and of global-sound fusion in general are likely to be left shrugging. The best mixes lovingly play to the strengths of both artist and remixer: Koop’s looped and boosted reworking of Susanna Baca’s version of “Afro Blue,” the reggaeton mix of Los Amigos Invisibles’ “Esto Es Lo Que Hay,” Scratch Perverts’ turntable-terror take on Clinton’s “Button Down Disco.” But the stuff fans might long for—Os Mutantes or Nouvelle Vague’s bossa-post-punk—is AWOL. *Justin Hopper*

**THE MAGNIFICENT 7
REGGAE HITS 35**

Jet Star/UK/CD
Clear the runway fe Jet Star, lifting off again with two new comps chock-full of the latest in dancehall vibes. Embedded among the wealth of smoothed-out lovers’ rock tunes on the 35th volume of *Reggae Hits* are some conscious gems, like Richie Spice’s “The Way You Are Living,” Don Campbell’s “Unchain Us,” and “Poverty” by QQ—a *liddle yout* with big talent, whose voice might remind some of Vicious. *The Magnificent 7* alternately serves up a top *shotta* sampler plate—contributions from Beenie Man, I-Wayne, Richie Spice, Jah Cure, Sizzla, Capleton, and Turbulence riff on everything from politics to sex. Both albums are good, but not great, and perhaps more suited to casual reggae listeners than the ultra-hardcore, who probably already have these tunes on 7-inch. *Eric K. Arnold*

MARC MAC: HOW ABOUT A GAME OF CHESS?

ABB Soul/US/12
From the depths of a Chess Record drought comes *How About A Game of Chess?*, a record that has the soulful energy of the greats with just enough street flare to keep hip-hop heads happy. The double LP features tracks with a plentitude of samples from the likes of Ramsey Lewis, Rotary Connection, Howlin’ Wolf, Dorothy Ashby, Shirley Scott, and Ahmad Jamal. Think jazzed-out horns, sporadic drumbeats, and some lazy days. If you’ve got love for the Visioneers or sleepy time soul, this is your jam. *Fred Miketa*

**SALMONELLA DUB
REMIXES AND RADIO CUTS**

Timeless Music/NZ/CD
The carefree horns of “Drifting” highlight what’s best about this five-piece New Zealand reggae outfit: an attention to the subtle nuances that serve as every band’s trademark. Add in great harmonies and production and this collection settles somewhere between dub lite and R&B. While displaying a penchant for the necessary resonant echo (check out Adrian Sherwood’s take on “Push on Thru”), this hodgepodge is truly scattered; for instance, a gorgeous Groove Corporation cut jogs alongside an unnecessarily hyper Concord Dawn drum & bass track. Like fellow New Zealanders Fat Freddy’s Drop, Salmonella’s brilliance lies in vocal hooks; when textured correctly, their sound sparkles. *Derek Beres*

SAN FRANCISCO UNDER A GROOVE

Newhouse/US/CD
The problem with a scene as rich as San Francisco’s is that it’s full of talented musicians setting the bar really high. On this compilation, Goapele’s “Closer” and the bass-driven “Where’s the Tape” from Triangle Orchestra do a good job of showcasing the

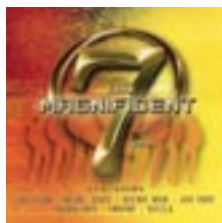
city’s distinctively warm, laid-back, and groovy style. In that vein, veteran Miguel Migs contributes “Do it for You,” and Karmacoda turns in their “Masterplan Remix,” which has the slicky vibe of an old Sneaker Pimps record. But with so many other excellent San Francisco comps already released, this one needs to be a bit more unique to make its desired impact. *Luciana Lopez*

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Ubiquity/US/Download
The stock over at the West Coast’s all-things-funky label Ubiquity has risen sharply over the past year. From the explosion of underground hip-hop hero Ohmega Watts to new releases from dancefloor hitters like Platinum Pied Pipers and Greyboy to funk/soul issues from Breakestra and Darondo, the well-established imprint seems to be going from strength to strength. *The Shape of Things to Come*, a download-only comp available through the label’s website, includes all of these artists as well as newer names such as Nino Moschella, whose rickety, Prince-styled bubble-funk on “Are You For Real” proves that, for Ubiquity in ‘06, the shape of things to come is quite appealing. *Justin Hopper*

JORIS VOORN: FUSE PRESENTS

Music Man/BEL/CD
Who is the best Dutch DJ? Not Tiësto, fool! It’s Joris Voorn, and he proves it again on this stunning mix of almost 40 tracks. Voorn, the producer behind the outstanding *Last Memories 12*’s, grabs a double-fisted handful of techno from past and present and gets all Ableton Live on its ass; there are only four tracks on here that get spun by themselves. Everyone else gets at least one partner, from Matthew Dear’s “Plinko” burning alongside “Phylps Track #2” by Phylps to Sleeparchive’s “Research” cozing up to Carl Craig’s “Sandstorm” and Dan Bell’s “Squirrel Bait.” Mind-boggling and ass shaking, this is some truly futuristic shit—even when the tracks are 10 years old. *Peter Nicholson*



DEATH FROM ABOVE 1979: ROMANCE BLOODY ROMANCE

Vice Recordings/US/CD
In the ‘70s, Steve Miller laid down some laudable mutant-disco boogie, and everyone from The Clash to KISS tried their hand at winning over DJs. Since those exceptions to the rule, dancefloor-aimed edits have become necessary to any indie combo’s edifice. Bloc Party’s *Silent Alarm Remixed* is a prime example: post-punk’s descendents transitioned into a gang of 4/4. Now, mangled, night-misogynistic Canadian duo DFA79 presents remixes that inject their songs with personable, if insistent, lockstep personalities. However, emotionally frenzied does not always translate well into robo-funk. Justice and Phones—the format’s *de facto* figureheads—illustrate remixing’s shortcoming: riding riffs to the point of over-saturation conversely dilutes them. Thankfully, reworks by Erol Alkan and Sammy Danger retain appropriate ratios of DFA79’s unHINGED blistering, while Alan Braxe, Fred Falke, and Marczek Makuziak buff their versions with Italo-electro optimism. *Tony Ware*



BUBBLE METROPOLIS
BY ML TRONIK
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Ready for some bangers? **Chris Liebing** and **Ben Sims** have teamed up for the sparsely titled *CLR 13* (CLR), which fires off two relentless tracks seemingly aimed at buildings made of corrugated steel. Essential percussive madness. I recommend following it with one of the three excellent tracks from **Daniel Jacques'** *Apher Faith of What* EP (SLS)—if you crunched your needle through these grooves, they'd ooze white-hot molten music. High-impact tech funk, each of this single's tracks was clearly designed to detonate the discotheque.

Is this 2006 or 1996? Who knows, but one second after the first break on **John Gaiser's** upcoming *Minus* debut, "And Answer," and you know you're hurtling towards the future. Label boss **Richie Hawtin** has been absolutely destroying the record's standout track, "Egress," in his DJ sets since September of last year.

Stripped down, brooding, and downright funky, the new release on Systematic from **Marc Romboy** and **Stephan Bodzin** reminds me of a couple of high-school crushes. Both "Luna" and "Miranda" are hot, but in different ways—they both deserve equal attention so don't spoil the fun! Meanwhile, **Stewart Walker** wheedles his way into your good graces with a sparkling new EP on Persona called *Spend the Day*. It features some nice and even surprising material from Walker, including a vocal track sung by the man himself. Now that's what I'm talkin' about, people!

Dig deep within yourself, and you'll be surprised at what you might find. I did, and out came three slamming releases on the Interdimensional Transmissions label. **Ectomorph** teams up with New York dance-rock godfather and Liquid Liquid bassist **Sal Principato** on *Chromed Out*, **Perspects** spreads a serious melodic electro fever about the place with his *Skillset: Parts* EP, and Chicago's **Insane Black Man** gives us harrowing, lo-fi experimentalism on his fantastic *Kill Bill* EP. Culled from old cassette tapes and mini- and floppy-disc demos, this EP begs the thought of what it would be like if **Kenny Dixon, Jr.** was born in the techno era rather than the disco one.

I like bubbles. That's why **Vernis'** *Bubble Bath* EP on Pocketgame is such a delight to me. Either that, or it's the bizarre photos of crusty alien heads on the picture disc that got me. Heavy, synth-driven German funk and bouncy techno is what you can expect from this one.

It's kind of weird when a label names itself **Great Stuff Recordings**, but DMS' "Troia" is comin' at ya straight out of Munich and they've got the melodic and tough beats to back up their label's claim. If you like Spiritcatcher and John Tejada, go find this one.

Octavia Butler wrote of bubbling metropolises on faraway planets; she might be particularly inspired if she heard **Codebase's** "Beat the Curve." Released on **Intrinsic Design**, this is a growling and deeply melodic three-track adventure with solid production. Fans of **Raiders of the Lost Ark** will not be disappointed.



TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS:
JAMES FUCKING FRIEDMAN

As the former US label manager for Trevor Jackson's Output Recordings, James Fucking Friedman was a tireless champion of new sounds. Not much has changed since he tossed off the shackles of label biz and fully embraced the decks. He's still the stalwart promoter he's always been and his debut release, a mix disc entitled *Go Commando!* (Defend), showcases all that's great of late. From the Rapture/HushHush remix of Norwegian songstress Annie's "Me Plus One" to killer dancefloor versions of The Knife and Tom Vek, Friedman runs the gamut between techno, house, electro, pop, and everything in between. We asked him to share three up-to-the-minute dancefloor rockers, which you might find in his well-traveled crates or on his soon-to-be-posted mixes at www.wps1.org and www.music-for-robots.com. *Ken Taylor* www.defendmusic.com

MARCUS LANGE
STRANGE SMILE (KAOS REMIX)

Dirty Dancing/US/12
Flipping a really bizarre filtered vocal over a propulsively minimal disco beat and some deep dark atmospheres, Kaos transforms Lange's original into a late-night rave stormer. This one is a killer in the club and also manages to avoid any of the predominant electro-house leitmotifs and things that plague the original. A bold new sound from one of Berlin's most slept-on talents. *James Fucking Friedman*

DELIA GONZALES AND GAVIN RUSSOM
RELEVÉE (CARL CRAIG REMIX)

DFA/US/12
Holy shit. This is a killer! Starting with a beatless, arpeggiating monster, Carl Craig turns out one stunning 12-minute techno opus that builds from burbling synths into a raging, propulsive techno track that includes crazy percussion, free jazz, piano, and the dopest, dubbiest handclaps ever. I don't think I have any records ill enough to follow it. *James Fucking Friedman*

SPENCERPASK
SCHNITZELTIME

white/US/CD-R
I try to support my friends in their creative endeavors and it's easy when they come up with fire like this one. Olivier Spencer of Mr. Negative/Mirrorboys/How&Why fame and NYC DJ/remixer extraordinaire Max Pask have teamed up recently and their cacophony of motorik beats and disco-fried synth lines keeps getting better. This one begins like Lindstrom's "I Feel Space" before morphing through the Teutonic stomp of Tiefschwarz's finest productions. Absolutely brilliant. *James Fucking Friedman*

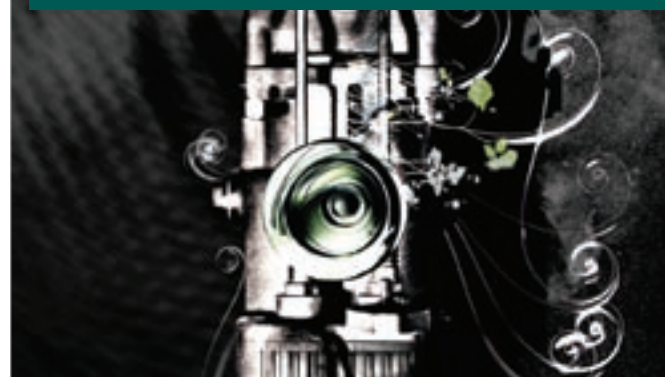


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READ THE LABEL
BY JESSE "OROSCO"
SERWER
HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



Well, we're three months into 2006, but my ass is still trying to digest 2005. Here's a rundown, so you know where my head's at. It was a pretty good year for hip-hop, I thought, with highlights coming from **Juelz Santana** (despite its length, *What The Game's Been Missing* was thorough, and "Whistle" and "Oh Yes" were the year's best singles), **Kanye**, **Three 6 Mafia** (the *Most Known Unknown* and the great "Stay Fly") and, on the indie front, **Edan's** *Beauty and the Beat*, an album so original yet so familiar. But while everyone was nutting over **Bun B** and **Little Brother** and that **Young Jeezy** record, they slept on the year's best rap albums: **Beanie Sigel's** *The B. Coming*, **DJ Quik's** *Trauma*, and **Black Rob's** *The Black Rob Report*.

Now on to the thing *XLRRR* actually asked me to talk about—new 12"s. If the A-side to **Azeem's** "I'm On" b/w "Rebel Ballad" and "Air Cartoons" (Oaklyn) is any indication of what to expect from the Oakland MC's upcoming *Air Cartoons* LP, then watch out. Producer **Aneurysm** brings the digital heat in a Tigerbeat 6 style but lyrically "I'm Off" is straight street. Unfortunately, the B-sides only disappoint—**Specks One's** *Discuss the Benefits of Said Collaborative Efforts Volume 1* EP (Fourth City) is on some real blunted, trippy shit. I want to call this psych rap, coming on the heels of Edan's album, but I don't want to be that dick who coins unnecessary sub-genres.

Former **Airborn Audio** member **CX Kidtronik** has re-emerged on Brooklyn's Sound-Ink label with his *Krak Attack* EP. You can't top the plumber's-crack collage cover art, but the impressive slate of enigmatic guest MCs—including **Rammellzee** and **Kong** of the **Monster Island Czars**—is a start.

On the DJ front, **DJ Premier** continues to step his game up, finally delivering the semi-regular series of mixtapes he'd been promising, the most recent of which was the very amusing *Holiday Hell* (Year Round Records). **The Rub** squad, led by Brooklyn's **DJ Ayres Haxton**, has also continued to bring the heat, dropping the self-explanatory *Houston for Dummies*, a primer on classic Houston joints (now that everyone wants to act like they've been listening to this stuff for the past decade). Also included is *Houston Rocks It*, a bonus CD from **DJ Eleven**, keeping you current on the latest Houston bangers.

Taking us back to a simpler time is **Sloppy White's** *Get Some*. Sloppy's mixtapes are the DJ-mixed equivalent of random rap audioblogs like *Cocaine Blunts* and *Hip-Hop Tapes*, digging out forgotten gems from the Golden Era *no one* else remembers. *Get Some* definitely doesn't disappoint: the "Dueling Banjos" sample on **Gee & Jay's** "Got To Get Some" (M.O.B.); sloppy plops samples from *Smokey and the Bandit*; and other truckin' classics on top of jams like **Finesse** and **Synquis'** hard, **Ced Gee**-produced "Fatal Beauty." The CD comes mounted on a mini-mudflap complete with nuts and bolts. Applaud this man.



WARM SPEAKERS
BY COLIN NAGY
HOUSE MUSIC AND ITS EXTENDED VARIATIONS



From the so-called ketaminimal sounds of **Ricardo Villalobos** and his band of Berlin-based bohemians to the electro-tinged cuts of **Get Physical** to psychedelic Nordic disco, deep house, and beyond, it's getting harder and harder to pin down a concise definition of what constitutes the house genre. It's constantly evolving, so I'm eager to hear what you're feeling, too. Please drop me a line at letters@xlr8r.com with recommendations, charts, tracks, or comments. Now, let's get started.

As part of Dialect Recordings' ongoing battle series, remixes of note **Evan Pearson** and **Al Usher**, who recently teamed up for a stellar dub of **Feist's** "Inside and Out," come together again under their **Partial Arts** moniker for a brooding underground house slab entitled "Cruising." The release will also feature "Ambition, Buddy" from Parisian **Tim Paris**. In true battle form, the three will release remixes of each other's tracks later in the year.

Moving Down Under for a moment, Australia's Modular label is releasing some top-notch remixes, notably **Cut Copy's** melodic electro-house take on **The Presets'** "Girl and the Sea" and **Digitalism's** remix of Cut Copy's "Going Nowhere." For more on the pop remix tip, check **Emperor Machine's** dub-and-vocal rubs of **Röyksopp's** "What Else is There?" (Astralwerks), which add more kick for the floor and quirky, delay-drenched synthesizers.

On the jazzier, soulful side of things, **DJ Language** has made quite a tune under his **Prince Language** moniker for the forthcoming Puma 5x12 box set. "Won't Do It" is a mid-tempo jazzy affair featuring soulful vocals from **Lindsey Caldwell** (of NYC's **Negroclash** fame) and refined production. A formal 12" release is to follow.

At one point, I dismissed all but a small section of new deep house as being mired in a serious rut. However, **Southern Roots'** "Sultan of Smoke" (Headset) and **Manmade Science's** "Smoke" (Philpot) have made me reconsider—the former for its nuanced, nimble percussion; the latter for the filtered dub vibes and standout soulful vocal.

There are a few reasons why Kompakt grabs a lion's share of press—they distribute loads of small sub-labels around the world and they consistently release some of the best dance music around. Keep your ears open for **Jonas Bering's** beautiful ambient house record, the *Behind the Silence* EP, as well as **Justus Köhncke's** and **Dirk Leyers'** **Kontrast** project, particularly the sexy, gloomy, sub-120 BPM of "Stammtisch der Verzweiflung" on the EP of the same name.

Since he's definitely blurring the fine line between techno and house these days, I feel obliged to mention **Triple R's** *Selection 4* mix, the latest summation of output on his consistently amazing Trapez imprint. Ideal for home listening, standouts include minimal-yet-melodic tracks from the likes of **Oliver Hacked** and **Dominik Eulberg**. It's all mixed in a fluid, cerebral style by one of the finest A&R men in dance music.

William Orbit
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BROKEN BUSINESS
BY PETER NICHOLSON
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Where do they send the wacked-out tracks, the ones with basslines too scary for Norwegian death metal, with jazzy bizness too hot for Lincoln Center, with beats so out there you need a telescope? They send 'em to me, baby! Coming in from Germany, the UK, New Zealand—wherever heads have a taste for freaky sounds and rhythms that move the feet 'round, producers are up to the good good.

Just head up the West Coast a bit and see what I mean. **The SunTzu Sound System's** been holding it down in Seattle for more than just a minute—matter of fact, they just celebrated three years with a party featuring **Jazzanova** at The Baltic Room. After hosting shows with the likes of Domu, Titonton Duvante, and Dixon, the SunTzu boys finally crammed into the studio and emerged with *SunTzu Sound EP01* on their eponymous label. Don't sleep on **AC Lewis ft. Ndiri Cascade's** "Tickles" on the B, a nice little stepper with an island feel. But the buzz is about the A, where **TLUV (Dr. J and Capitol A)** delivers "Black Daylight." **Phil Asher** is calling it a Co-Op anthem, and with a lead-foot beat kicking a rubber-ball bass beneath angelic vocals from **Jzabela**, it's easy to see why.

When **J-Nova** was in Seattle, they were probably slinging a few Compost Records tunes around (even though the two crews are no longer business partners, word is there's no hard feelings). Top of the list might have been the **Eddy Meets Yannah Shamed 12**—both of **Domu's** mixes are super hot, with extra crispy snare rolls naturally coming to the fore on "Domu Beats." And the "EmY Adria Mix" of "Changes" is a nice bonus—love the string and piano stabs! Compost also has a winner in *Black Label #08*, which sports three cuts from **Syrup** in an electro 4/4 style that works well with the bruk business—the handclaps and breakbeats of "Kingsize Red" are what I'm feeling.

In a similar electro vein—but with more of the jazz flavors for which he's known—is **Mark de Clive-Lowe's** re-rub of **Phuturistix's** "Fly Away" (Phuture Lounge). The Antipodean also keeps it coming with **David Borsu's** "Move" on the most excellent Counterpoint label. Warbling keys remind of mad-scientist-style theremins, while the MPC breakdown shatters all daydreams and commands you to dance.

Also coming out of MdCL's New Zealand territory is the first release from **Jason Eli's** Groovadelica label. Eli's been running a radio show by the same name on Auckland's George FM, and now he teams up with **Ashley Knox** as **Joos**. The *Joos* EP features funky guitar and **Lindah E.** on vocals. Man, it's a tight one.

Ahh! Here comes the print equivalent of "Last call for alcohol!" As the lights come up, I've got to give a quick shout out to two last tunes: **Bugz In The Attic's** "Sounds Like" (V2) and the **4Hero** mix of **Big Bang's** "Sweet Y Sour" (Arision). Go find 'em! Your ears will thank you.



FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS:
ANDRÉ OREFJÄRD

Growing up in Sweden with a Rwandan father, producer André Orefjård's house was filled with an amalgam of different sounds. Everyone from Manu Dibango to Pete Rock influenced his jazzy, soulful upbringing, but it wasn't until 2000 that he fully embraced his musical career—at the behest of some Swedish journalists. Now—with his debut solo LP, *Refreshment of Thoughts*, out on his own Creative Souls label, and praise from the likes of Gilles Peterson and Nuphonic's David Hill—he's poised to take the future jazz set by storm. Keep an eye out for his *Push Your Love On Me* EP on the Swedish label Brandy and, forthcoming later this year, a record with his latest collective, Les Motes. *Ken Taylor* www.creativesouls.net

I (A.K.A. UNAI)
WIDE ROAD (SOULTEK'S MORNING REMIX)
Souldubsounds/US/12

What is it that makes a great track? Mood? Arrangement? Beats? The message? This has it all. The intro evolves from a combination of pads, vocals, and a deep electronic bass. A landscape of dark house with a touch of dub spreads it out. The vocals add a glimmer of hope to this landscape and the experience is absolutely beautiful! *André Orefjård*

HASSANAH
RELEASE
Mellotone/US/12

This is a real mellow one from the producer of some of Dave Ghetto's greatest tracks. This is one of those tracks you'll just chill to, with a thick, heavy groove and a nicely chopped guitar sample. Hassanah's sensual but raw voice serves as the icing on the cake. A brilliant pick up from where Black Star left off. *André Orefjård*

HEARIN AID
MY APPROVAL
Raw Fusion/SWE/12

Do you remember the last time you went to see a hip-hop act perform and they actually made you happy? These guys know how to party, and so does this track. It's soulful, it's dirty, and it has that bumpy, stop-and-go feeling that makes your head nod. A mellow bridge takes you back to some old school tune from '95. This is great stuff! *André Orefjård*

The National Trust
Kings and Queens CD

The National Trust's second full-length album recorded with producer/engineer Abel Garibaldi and featuring the family of Kelan Phil Cohran—the Brass ensemble Hypnotic, and Bass hero Charles "Chuck-a-luck" Hosch (Emotions). Mastered by Herb Powers. Painstakingly Crafted, Honey-Coated Grooves... Body Music.



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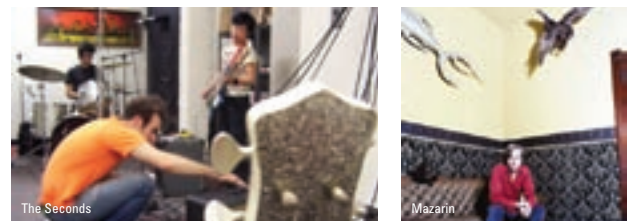
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AFTER SILENCE
BY MARTIN DE LEON II
THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Caps-lock nerd rock and pink beats are how I say hello. Years get gray, but I look for newness where delay pedals grow in the ground. And I've come to the conclusion that this year will be one of what I call "no-ground," a post-underground overlapping of genres... and this is only the beginning.

White Rainbow is a good example of how obfuscation can earn you brownie points. The Portland quartet's album, **Zome** (States Rights), is mysterious syrup rock with lazy vocals and prickly guitars. "Guided Golden Ladies" is like Bardo Pond trying to be slow. Krautrock is definitely penciled in here—why, "Germany" is all Amon Duul and Neu! playing freeze tag. Analog clouds rain on this music from above.

Look up **Yasushi Miura** in a book and you'll find a blank page; listen, and you'll hear rural beats. Throwback glitch and blippy atmospherics go berserk on **Connection and Repetition** (KP). Though somewhat dated, the idealism of Miura's beats ("Shinjuku on Sunday") and meaty tempos ("October 1986") creates nostalgia for places you've never visited. Plus, there are pink cats on the album cover.

Philadelphia's indie-pop quartet **Mazarin** also purrs with fuzzy guitars and neurotic synthesizers. **We're Already There** (I and Ear) sounds better than anything Clap Your Hands Say Yeah could dream of. Danceable and cheery, yet contemplative, unorthodox structures and spaces left between verses make you think this band will be around for a while.

Like a gun are Brooklyn's **The Seconds**. A trio consisting of **Yeah Yeah Yeahs'** drummer **Brian Chase**, bassist **Jeannie Kwon**, and guitarist **Zach Lehroff** from **Ex-Models**, they throw elbows at all comers. **Kratitude** (5RC), their debut, is like Throbbing Gristle but much louder. Using Dadaist lyricism, playful art punk, and lots of yelling, they manage to punch out 11 songs with brutal eloquence.

Not so noisy are **The Zom Zoms**, who playfully put the neu in New Wave with their album, **Yellow Rainbow** (Omega Point). The Austin trio has been strutting their matching shirts and trusty synth-punk for over three years now, with no end in sight. Crunchy synthesizers loop on "Deciduous Prophet" as robots spazz beneath an assembly-line pitter-patter beat. They will make you fall in love with our nerdy future.

Laura Minor, on the other hand, is the future. The Florida native's **Let Evening Come** (N/A) is like My Bloody Valentine meets Lucinda Williams; a pretty blend of shoegazer country. Produced by hip-hop crew **dàlek**, whose dark beats augment Minor's pristine voice, the excellent album is both soulful and haunting.

Scaring you with psychedelic art, erudite ex-**Black Dice** drummer **Hisham Bharoocha** is now recording as **Soft Circle**, and has made an album with **Yamatsuka Eye** of **The Boredoms**. He's also just started an unnamed band with **Prefuse 73's Scott Herren**. Like I said: this is only the beginning.



THE DOWN-BEAT DIASPORA
BY RICO "SUPERBIZZEE"
WASHINGTON
GETTING YOU UP ON THE SHARPEST SOUL, FUNK, AND R&B



Daronido (PHOTO Morgan Howland)



?uestlove

Spring should be creepin' up on us any moment now, so hopefully we can finally shed the bulky winter coats and break out the windbreakers. But if that ol' groundhog gets scurr'd, at least we've got the WMC '06 festivities to look forward to. Like my Moms always said, ain't nothin' a little debauchery, guestlist party hoppin', and plain ol' fun in the sun won't cure. Whether you're shivering in North Dakota or frolicking in South Beach, here's some sounds to help you get down.

If you find yourself curious as to what would happen if you crossed Al Green and Syl Johnson with a California version of Iceberg Slim, pick up **Daronido's Let My People Go** (Luv N' Haight/Ubiquity). This cat's got chops that rival any of his '70s soul contemporaries and an urban folklore that would make even the late Rick James roll over in his grave!

In case your radar is on the fritz, critically acclaimed soul slinger **Anthony Hamilton** is back with a brand spankin' new cut. "Change Your World" (So So Def/Zomba) is a classic slice of nostalgia-seasoned soul at its finest. But with Soulquarians **James Poyser** and **?uestlove** behind the boards and Philly soul vet Larry Gold charting the strings, would you expect any less? For those of you hipsters with no point of musical reference of Brazil beyond baile funk, cop the reunion album by '70s funk outfit **Uniao Black, Banda Uniao Black** (Commonfolk)—signed, sealed, and delivered by Brazilian Beat's own **Sean Marquand**. Meanwhile, our funky Illsburg brethren at Truth & Soul Records have birthed yet two more 7" soul sides. **El Michels Affair** delivers the first installation of **Wu-Tang** soul covers in their Shaolin Series with the double-sided "C.R.E.A.M." b/w "Glaciers of Ice." Then, under

the auspices of **The Expressions**, the fellas get real blaxploitation on that ass with the 7" "Money I\$ King." At the Truth & Soul compound, joints 'n' jams are never in short supply.

In other news, **Masters At Work** session keyboardist **Selan** releases his second single, "Gravity," on **Louie Vega's** Vega Records. As if racking up songwriting credits on albums by Japanese soul superstar Toshi and pop-R&B princess Ashanti wasn't enough of a resume builder! After mic checkin', tunin' up, and huggin' it out for six months in a series of live showcases, D.C. vocalist **Alice Smith** readies her rock 'n' soul debut, **For Lovers, Dreamers & Me** (BBE). Hate to disappoint, but ain't no Muppets renditions here. Just straight up sangin'. Fuck the pretense; this is already one of the best records of the year. Let's say a few Hail Marys that it doesn't get slept on, like Cree Summer's debut.

Last, but not least, keep your eyes peeled for the re-release of **Georgia Anne Muldrow's Worthnothings** EP (Stones Throw). Like I told y'all last year, homegirl is on the money. Don't sleep.

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STEREO TOTAL
Discotheque
CD/EP

With releases on **Kill Rock Stars** and **Bobsled**, duo **Stereo Total** release their remix CD on venerable electro label **Disko B**. Includes remixes from **Justus Köhncke**, **Mad Professor**, **Munk** and their covers of **Nico's** "Chelsea Girls" and the **Rolling Stones'** "Mother's Little Helper." More pogo party music from **Françoise Cactus** and **Brezel Göring**.

BURNT FRIEDMAN & JAKI LIEBEZEIT
Secret Rhythms 2
CD/2LP

Two giants return for a second collaboration. **Liebezeit** invented the cyclical and liberating beat of **Can**, while **Friedman** is half of **Flanger** with **Atom Heart**. Together, these modern percussion masters create hypnotic and open music for your cinematic lifestyle. One track features **David Sylvian** on vocals. "Secret Rhythms isj...a quiet revelation." — **The Wire**

GUITAR
Tokyo
CD

The follow-up to the critically-acclaimed, **My Bloody Valentine**-inspired **Sunkissed** CD on **Morr Music** ("[A] breath of fresh air" — **Pitchfork**), **Tokyo** is a direct melding of traditional Japanese music and modern electronic production. Featuring vocals from **Ayako Akashiba**. Chill-out music for your meditative daydream. Real, real pretty.

BIOSPHERE
Drosonde
CD/LP

The inventor of Arctic sound and father of **ambient techno**, **Biosphere** (aka **Geir Jenssen**) releases his 10th full-length LP; and the master has not lost his touch. **Drosonde** ascends like a weather balloon: slowly rising only to settle at unreal heights. "Biosphere, for a decade now, has designed the blueprint for resonant, ambient techno." — **XL&R**

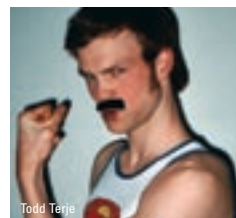
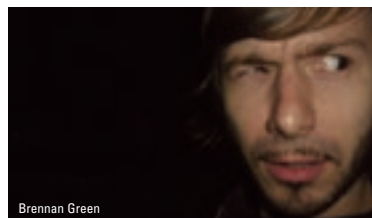
BONDAGE FAIRIES
What You Didn't Know When You Hired Me
CD

Hotly-tipped Swedish death/robot/noise outfit the **Bondage Fairies** are radicals. With a confrontational attitude, the duo skin lo-fi electro, almost like **ADULT**, on **Load Records**. Their live shows are legendary in Scandinavia, sparking a gamut of live video downloads worldwide. "The brightest shining stars in contemporary Commadore 64 music." — **Nuloop.com**

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Retailers: request wholesale information from fe@forcedexposure.com



APOCALYPSE WOW!
BY ROY DANK
TRAVERSING TIME AND SPACE IN SEARCH OF
ODDBALL DANCE AND POST-PUNK GOODIES



Hot damn! The drought is over, my friends! Head to your local music emporium—or all dem spots on the interweb I know you're lurking at—and behold a bevy of new musical treasures!

Berlin badbwoy **Kaos** ropes in **Liquid Liquid's Sal Principato** and **Captain Comatose's Khan** for "Cerebral Tremolo," the latest disco nugget on **Ben Cook** and **Jason/DJ Spun's** Rong label. Meanwhile, Parisian label Kitsuné joins in on the fun as well and rolls out the European release with a Khan remix. Can you say "international conspiracy?"

Speaking of Germans, Munich's **Muallem** does Compost proud with his varied debut album, *Frankie Splits*. Look for forthcoming remixes, including "New Thunder" by the mighty **Emperor Machine** and "Cheerleader" by **Kaos**.

Andy Meecham sheds the Emperor Machine moniker for a hot minute to team up with **Chicken Lips** partner **Dean Meredith** on "White Dwarf," the latest single leading up to the Lips' highly anticipated full-length. The boys channel Talking Heads for one helluva butt-shaker.

DC Recordings continues to up the out-there-disco ante with a second **Padded Cell 12**, "Are You Anywhere?," and new signing, **The Orichalc Phase**, who brings us the Krautrock-inspired "Respond In Silence." Can this label do no wrong? Methinks not.

The Norwegian disko assault continues this spring with shitloads of remixes and original work. Highlights include **Lindström's** "Another Station" (Feedility), which gets a dancefloor-smashing overhaul from the seemingly unstoppable **Todd Terje**, plus Lindström & **Prins Thomas'** remixes of lost French punk-funk band **Allez Allez** and downtempo heavyweights **Tosca**.

Back on our side of the pond—or, more specifically, the East Coast—loads of exciting stuff is in the works. Mean **Brennan Green** struts his stuff on "Bunko" b/w "Divisadero," the latest 12" gem on the Brooklyn-based Modal label. Green's also churning out the remixes these days, namely versions of Lindström's "Pesto Og Kolera" and **Dead Seal Wave's** "Born of the Future." You heard it here first.

Nick Chacona returns to the Bearfunk fold with "A Cambria Heights Affair," a sublime synth-y piece that boasts a **Henrik Schwarz** mix. Chacona also makes his Wax debut with "Hush No Rush," an uptempo anthem-in-the-making that gets the technified treatment from SF duo **Broker/Dealer**.

Elsewhere in Brooklyn, **Morgan Geist's** Environ label expands its artist roster with **Escort**, a proper disco band whose forthcoming single, "Starlight," is as authentic as it comes.

DFA continues its steady flows of remixes with **Carl Craig**, **Baby Ford**, and the DFA duo themselves taking on **Delia Gonzales** and **Gavin Russom's** "Relevee." Yes, you did read that correctly. Carl Craig on DFA! And, yes, it's as mind-blowing as you can imagine.



EVERLASTING BASS
BY KID KAMELEON
LOW-END, FROM FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



RQM of **Al-Haca** and **The Tape** once asked me what was up with me and bass. My answer was "bass equals depth." It's not just depth of frequencies but the depth of production. It's complex musical thoughts, tracks that don't go for the easy thrill but find science between the echowaves of dub, the skittering beats of dubstep, the cut-up madness of Bmore breaks, and the wobble of ragga's basslines.

I think RQM smiled—and why shouldn't he, since he and Al-Haca have a trio of smashers out: "126" on **Bomb Mitte**, "Mindgames/Daybreak" on **Metapoly**, and "Earth" from the **Tolcha/Al-Haca** combination **Ütz**. Fellow Berliners, the cheeky electro-dubsters **Modeselektor**, are doing up the best tracks from their album *Hello Mom!* with a remix EP on **Ellen Allien's** Bpitch Control. Vocalists **Sasha Perera** of **Jahcoozi**, French hip-hopsters **TTC**, and dübermensch **Paul St. Hilaire** will get remix treatment by **Dabrye**, **Siriusmo**, **Sleeparchive**, and a mystery guest.

A hop across the channel finds the mighty **J Star** releasing *Most Wanted Vol. 2* on his J Star label, compiling the best from his 7" series where Snoop, Dead Prez, and even Toni Braxton get heavily mashed with some classic dub riddims. Just pray his **Ms. Dynamite** remix sees the light of day! Also in England, the entire **DMZ** extended family (**Digital Mystikz**, **Loefah**, **Skream**, and **Kode9**) hired two coaches to drive their fans up from London to the February Sub Dub show in Leeds. On the way, they blasted Tempa Records' third installment of *Dubstep Allstars*, mixed by **Kode9** with **Spaceape** toasting. DMZ friends **Appleblim** and **Shackleton** are also sitting pretty on the second 12" from their Skull Disco label, and slightly more in the breaks camp, twin singles of

stellar weirdness are out from **Screwface** ("Phat Bass"/"Monte") and **DJ Mutiny** ("Pressure Time"/"The Chase") on Hardcore Beats and Wireframe, respectively.

If Germany and England are all about soul-shattering dub, America just wants you to throw your drinks up. Bmore and Philly are cracking at the moment. **Diplo**'s got his *Baltimore* EP out as well as a great remix of **Edu K's** "Popozuda" on Man Recordings, and veteran Bmore DJ **Tittsworth** is absolutely tearing things up with his second self-released EP, with remixes of everyone from **Three 6 to The Jeffersons**.

Traveling north into ragga country finds Boston's Mashit label finally releasing "Crazy Baldheads," with Beantown's **DJ C** and Toronto's **Debaser** on remix detail. **Aaron Spectre's** got Mashit 9 lined up and Debaser has a whole clutch of tunes from himself, **Sixteenarmedjack**, **Rhygin**, and **Deportee** on tap for his Press Up and Jungle Royale labels. Fellow Toronto producer **RCola** also has several tunes and remixes out on Royal Crown, Wikkid, and new imprint Humble.

If your bass journey lands you in breakcore territory, know that **Rotator**, Peace Off's label boss, is absolutely unerring when it comes to quality control. He gets the best work out of anyone who gives him material, with stellar EPs from **Eight Frozen Modules** and **Enduser** already out, and new material from **Drop the Lime**, **Mathhead**, and the mysterious **Black Ham** on the way.

And finally, because bass loves all outsiders, make sure to keep an ear out for genre-less drum & bass dude **UFO!** He's back with new tracks finished on the electro-house tip under the name **Runnin Red Lights**. Weighty.

Ok Cowboy
VITALIC



In Stores: February 21st

The internationally acclaimed artist that has been driving dancefloors mad offers us his expected first hit album. Includes the singles "Poney Part 1", "My Friend Dario", "La Rock 01"...

MARCH

Thursday 16	New York	@ Avalon
Friday 17	Philadelphia	@ Fluid
Saturday 18	Detroit	@ Oslo
Wednesday 22	Miami	@ M3
Thursday 23	Miami	@ Aramis
Friday 24	Chicago	@ Smart Bar
Saturday 25	San Francisco	@ RX Gallery



birdy nam nam
+DVD including live performances, documentary, pictures, bonus

MARCH

Saturday 18th	Austin	@ South By South West
Monday 20th	Los Angeles	@ Tangier
Tuesday 21st	San Francisco	@ Boca
Saturday 25th	Miami	@ Ultra
Sunday 26th	Miami	@ Performing Arts Center
Tuesday 28th	New York	@ French Tuesdays
Wednesday 29th	New York	@ Knitting Factory
Friday 31st	Philadelphia	@ The Fire

APRIL

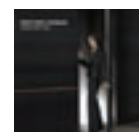
Saturday 1st	Detroit	@ Oslo (w/DJ Buzz Goree,UR)
Sunday 2nd	Chicago	@ Empty Bottle

Alternately gloomy or funky, the Birdy Nam Nam sound is able to decapitate the trumpets and slash the pianos. This record contains the entire history of music. Those four no longer play records, they play music.



In Stores: March 7th

ALSO AVAILABLE



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Saturday 11	San Francisco	@ Ruby Sky
Saturday 19	Puerto Rico	@ Stereo Festival
Thursday 23	Miami	@ Tronic Treatment, Players
Friday 24	Miami	@ An Only Party, Nocturnal
Saturday 25	Miami	@ Ultra Festival



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www.uncivilizedworld.com



LUCKY 13
BY TOPH ONE

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at www.fabric8.com/redwine. Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.



Toph One and Spider



Sergio Mendes



Will.i.am



Audio Angel

And it was written that, on an ink-black night in deepest December, a Murderous Imbecile shall come careening down 20th Street in the Mission, and his foul-mouthed SUV of Death will run our beloved Spider into the pavement, but SPIDER SHALL PREVAIL, and he will ride again, and the Earth will heal her wounds...

A familiar and smiling face in countless Bay Area communities, from Burning Man to the CycleCide Bike Club; a volunteer at the Crucible and Bike Kitchen; a fixture at Tubesteak Connection and the Knees-Up parties; and a rider on the AIDS LifeCycle, Spider Davila (in or out of porno-clown drag) has been sharing his warmth and love for years, and now he needs a little help from his friends. Check www.cyclecide.com for details on the hit-and-run accident, the \$10,000 reward for the dark-colored SUV, and help out with a donation or come party at a benefit! Ride on, Spider. Team Wino *por vida!*

1) KIRB & CHRIS NIGGAZ AND WHITE GIRLZ

(Rapitalism/US/LP, CD) This is what hip-hop should be: fun and goofy and innovative as all hell. Flipping everything from Gary Numan to The Motels, with enough skits to make Prince Paul proud, Kirby Dominant and Chris Sinister take you through the clubs and streets, "new-wave thuggin'," with tongue planted firmly in cheek.

2) IN FLAGRANTI TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO SWEAR

(Codek/US/12EP) Lesson 1) Listen to anything on Codek. Lesson 2) If it says "In Flagranti," buy it. Twangy electro funk/dub guaranteed to bounce the haircuts into vodka-cran heaven.

3) PANACEA THINKING FORWARD LOOKING BACK

(Glow-In-The-Dark/US/12EP) DC-based Raw Poetic and producer K-Murdock have crafted one of the sweetest debuts heard in quite some time; deep, soulful hip-hop for the seasoned traveler, and it sounds like nothing else out there. Beautiful.

4) THE FUN YEARS WHY WE'RE ALL BELOW AVERAGE

(self/US/CD) Why is Boston the drone music capital of the universe? The Fun Years may be nipping at the heels of the all-mighty Bionaut as my all-time favorite "warm fuzzy" group. (Note to Bionaut: make more music!)

5) AZEEM "I'M ON"

(Oaklyn/US/12) Way to start a new label—lay out a razor-sharp drunk beat by a producer named Aneurysm, and have Azeem rip it the hell up. Is this US grime? Who cares! Start up a pit and rock out.

6) CX KIDTRONIK KRAK ATTACK

(Sound-Ink/US/12EP) Speaking of starting a pit at a hip-hop show, here comes Anti-Pop DJ CX Kidtronik and pals Rammellzee and High Priest to fuck up your notions of just what hip-hop is in 2006. File next to Fishbone, Bad Brains, and Afrika Bambaataa.

7) RONDENION BLUE RHODES DANCES

(Still Music/US/12EP) The deep title track fully lives up to its name, but I'm feeling Tokyo's Hirofumi Goto the most on the funky and shuffling "Machine Doll." A big hip-hop beat with a looping vocal and a low house boom round it out.

8) JO-S & AUDIO ANGEL ONCE UPON A TIME

(Groove Riders/US/CD) I'd go out of my way to hear Audio Angel rock a mic, and this mix makes me want to ride a bullet train through the Japanese countryside curled up in the arms of Scarlett Johansson.

9) SERGIO MENDES FEAT. Q-TIP AND WILL.I.AM "THE FROG"

(Concord/US/CD) I dig seeing cats like Roy Ayers and Sergio Mendes stepping back into the spotlight and getting their due.

Produced by Will.i.am, *Timeless* features Stevie Wonder, Chali2na, Mr. Vegas, Erykah Badu, and Black Thought, as well as this snappy number showcasing Q-Tip in fine form.

10) V/A DUBLAB PRESENTS IN THE LOOP: 2

(Plug Research/US/12EP) There's a very soft spot in my heart for all things Dublab, and this latest installment only snowballs that spot into a big meatball of love. A rarity from Sa-Ra, a quickie from Prefuse 73, a Beatles-esque epic from my man Nobody, and a snappy, Cure-inspired fairy tale from Daedelus make this a keeper.

11) BIGGA BUSH THIS RIVER

(Stereo Deluxe/GER/12EP) Glyn "Bigga" Bush is one of those guys you should pay attention to (check out his brilliant *Sound Sensation* selection CD). Right now, his "Outernational Anthem (Tweak Remix)" is in major rotation in my world.

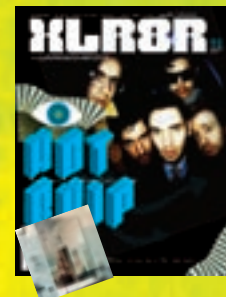
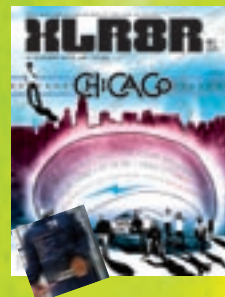
12) THOMAS BLONDET "EUROPEAN COASTER"

(Rhythm & Culture/US/12) Sexy guitar and keys by the Shecter Brothers made this the hit of the night up at Vail, CO—the bunnies were hoppin' and the beats were tight!

LUCKY 13) ANDY HOWELL ART, SKATEBOARDING & LIFE

(Ginkgo Press/US/book) Everyone under 30 should buy this book and feel thoroughly inspired to create and rejoice and be free.

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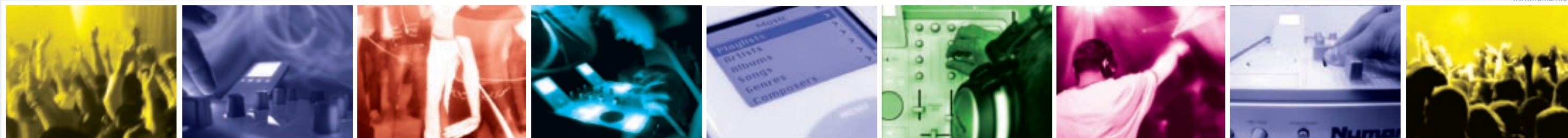
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Ghislain Poirier clears the path to his studio door

IN THE STUDIO GHISLAIN POIRIER

A FRENCH-CANADIAN GENRE-SMASHER TALKS SIMPLE SOLUTIONS.
WORDS: MATT EARP PHOTO: MIKE CASALI

The second half of 2005 brought a hat trick of major accomplishments for Montreal-based MC-turned-producer Ghislain Poirier. He started his “irregular monthly” at Montreal’s Zoobizarre, kicking it off in July with French hip-hop stars TTC. The night now draws over 250 people to hear guests including Shadetek and Ottawa’s Disorganized crew. He hooked up with England’s MC-of-the-moment Lady Sovereign, opening for her on her North American tour and remixing her track “Fiddle With the Volume,” which has been tearing up dancefloors across the continent. To top it off, his second LP, *Breakupdown*, a record that infectiously tweaks hip-hop and ragga with guests like Beans and DJ Collage—was released in February on Chocolate Industries. The busy DJ and producer took the time to shed some light on his “If it works, use it” philosophy, talking to *XLR8R* about his minimal setup, dirty recording vs. clean mastering, and his love affair with Fruity Loops.

HOW DID YOUR BOUNCE LE GROS PARTIES GET STARTED?

I was DJing a lot this year but always in a context where I had to adapt myself to other people. Sometimes funk/soul nights, sometimes IDM—I love a lot of music so it’s easy to do that, but at a certain point I was not totally free. I realized nobody would give me the liberty to play exactly what I want if I don’t take it myself. I tried it in July and it was super fun. People are really open-minded so I can do what I want. I can switch styles every two tracks if I want and nobody will care. If I drop good tracks, people will just dig it.

WHAT’S YOUR BASIC STUDIO SETUP?

I’m pretty minimal in my studio, and it’s always funny when I say “studio” because I’m mainly working with just the laptop. Nothing exceptional; it’s pretty old. For programs, I use mainly Cool Edit Pro and Fruity Loops, which is so easy and—what can I say—just useful!

ANY OUTBOARD STUFF? HARDWARE? FX?

I just recently bought this little sampler, the Boss SP-303 Dr. Sample, a couple months ago. I’ve used it for some of my more ambient and noisy music that’s not released yet. Also, I bring it when I have DJ gigs to have some extra sounds, to give me a little more humanity when I’m playing.

SO WHEN YOU PLAY LIVE THE SETUP IS THE LAPTOP, THE DR. SAMPLE, AND THEN A MIDI TRIGGER?

Not even a MIDI keyboard; just a little mixer to put everything in. I’d like a MIDI trigger but I’m pretty slow to buy equipment and I’m pretty efficient with the laptop and the SP-303.

HOW DO YOU GET THE PARTICULAR SOUNDS AND SAMPLES YOU’RE WORKING WITH?

I never use sample banks or CD samples. I get them all simply by sampling other records or even sampling myself. Sometimes people ask me how I did this or that sound and I say, “I did it by myself.” [Laughs]. Although lately I have been using some of the presets in Fruity Loops because when you want to do something really powerful for the club, some presets are really efficient and really clean—especially for the bass sounds. For me, it was liberating to explore Fruity Loops and find the bass, since recently that’s what I’ve been spending the most time on in my music: how to treat the bass.

FAVORITE MICROPHONE?

I use a Rode NT1000. It’s good for rapping but I’m not too picky about this stuff because when all my sound is kind of dirty, it makes sense also to have dirty [vocal] recordings.

WHO DOES YOUR MASTERING?

For *Breakupdown*, it was somebody in Chicago that [Chocolate Industries] usually uses. For other stuff, I’m doing the mastering with a guy in Montreal named Louis Dufort. He did the mastering for the next Shockout release. He’s from the electro-acoustic field but he also really digs hip-hop. What he’s doing is really key to making the sound better, more round.

YOU’VE DONE A LOT OF GREAT MASH-UPS IN ADDITION TO ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS. WILL ANY OF THEM EVER GET A RELEASE?

Yeah, in 2006 I’m doing an independent release on CD called *Bounce le Remix*, which will be [comprised of] 13 remixes, eight of which will also [appear] on vinyl. Some have been done for over a year and it’s club music, so it has to be released soon.

YOU DON’T HAVE ANY WORRIES ABOUT RELEASING THEM?

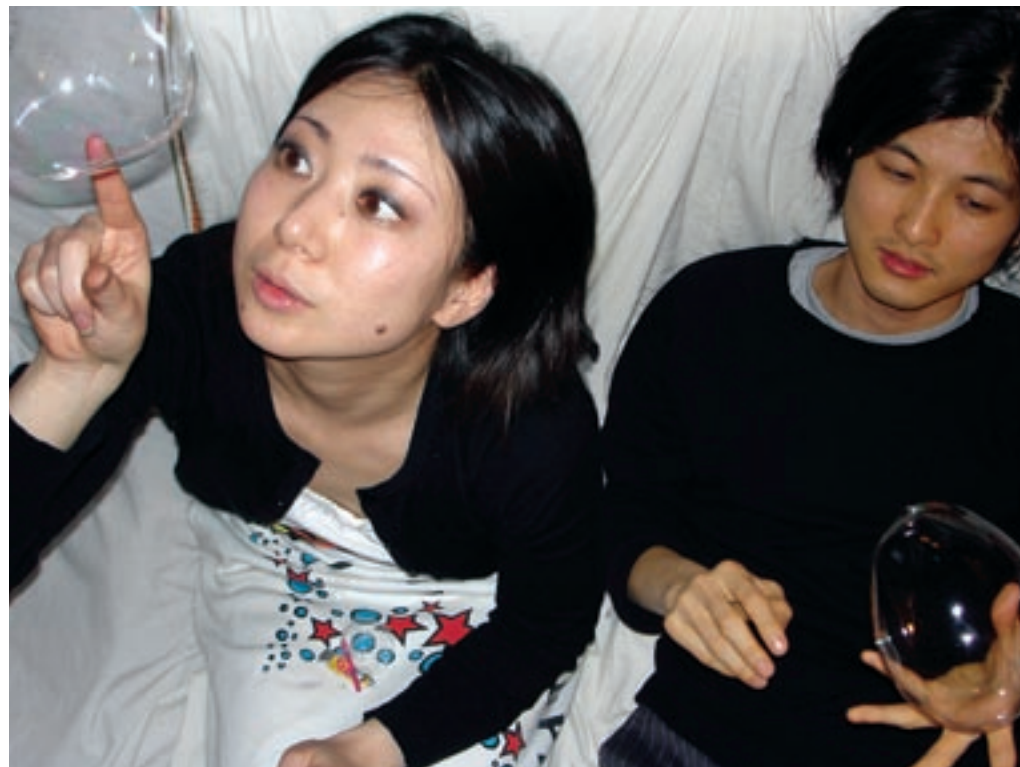
Hey, when people release a mixtape in the States they put their real name on it, and afterwards they say “For Promotional Use Only.” Major labels encourage people to do bootlegs; they put the acapella on the records. So I’m seeing this release as more a mixtape than something illegal—just something I want to share with the people and for the DJs.

Breakupdown is out now on Chocolate Industries. www.ghislainpoirier.com



Inside Ghislain Poirier’s studio (clockwise from left), Roland Boss SP-303, Rode NT1000 mic, Fruity Loops retail box, Cool Edit Pro screen, Fruity Loops screen

ARTIST TIPS:
TUJIKO NORIKO &
AOKI TAKAMASA



They say that if you're going to take nude photos of yourself, make sure to do it before you're 30. Though the latest team effort from Japanese artists Tujiko Noriko and Aoki Takamasa isn't quite as revealing as snaps of a drugged-out night in Terry Richardson's apartment, *28* (Fat Cat) is no less a personal document. Three years in the making, *28* was recorded between Takamasa's home in Osaka and Noriko's Parisian outpost, and blends Noriko's softly hewn Japanese vocals with rhythmic layers of found sounds and lush, sometimes-erratic beats. Photographic references aside—well, not entirely aside, as the audio-recording function on Takamasa's camcorder played a role in putting certain sound sources to disk—the pair of 28-year-olds gave us a quick look into the tools that made their 'cross-the-bandwidth collaboration possible. *Ken Taylor*

www.fat-cat.co.uk

Mac PowerBook G4 1Ghz Laptop

This is the main tool for me to create sounds and songs. Unfortunately, I can't make music without it at the moment. Most PCs look awful so I don't want to put them in my room, and I don't feel like creating music with such a badly designed tool, so that's why I chose the PowerBook—it's much better to look at! And also, OSX looks much nicer than Windows. *Aoki Takamasa*

Neumann TLM 103 Microphone & MOTU 2408 Soundcard

I have this microphone in my flat so I can sing and record on my own at anytime. I record directly into my computer through a MOTU soundcard. That's it. *Tujiko Noriko*

Taiyo Yuden CD-Rs

This is a Japanese company and the discs are quite reasonably priced. They sound much better than other cheap CD-Rs. Aside from CD-Rs, though, I also uploaded unfinished songs and files on my server and had Noriko download them. *Aoki Takamasa*

Korg Z1 Synthesizer

Most of the synth sounds on *28* came from this synthesizer. It's my favorite. It's also got a great look, and really fits my style. I especially love its bass sound. *Aoki Takamasa*

Logic Pro 6.4.1 and Max/MSP 4.2.1 Software

I edit most of the sound files with Logic Pro and do almost all of the mixing work with this, too. But I use Max/MSP software to create my favorite sounds. I also use it to create strange sequences for drum patterns and special sound effects. *Aoki Takamasa*



TOP. Logic Pro 6.4.1, Max/MSP 4.2.1 Software. MIDDLE. Neumann TLM 103 Microphone, Korg Z1 Synthesizer. BOTTOM. MOTU 2408, Mac PowerBook G4 1Ghz Laptop.



EYE/EAR POD

CREATIVE ZEN VISION: M MEDIA PLAYER
MSRP. \$329.99; WWW.CREATIVE.COM

When you're the media Goliath on top, every friend named David has got a slingshot in their back pocket waiting for you to mess up. Now that Apple's iPod line has reached the saturation point, we early adopters and tech-lusters are ready for the style and expansiveness of the 30Gb Creative Zen Vision: M. Forget all those redundant Altec and Belkin add-ons; it's about all-in-one, like Vision: M's built-in FM tuner, voice recorder, multiple colorways, cool vertical navigation pad, and download capacity (for more than just iTunes). You can ogle all the photos and video (up to four hours) you want, although you must run the video through conversion software to get it onto the player. Overall, though, with its long battery life and wide array of music and visual options, Vision: M is what we want now, not two years from now. *Tomas Palermo*



REQUIRED READING

THE S.M.A.R.T. GUIDE TO DIGITAL RECORDING, SOFTWARE, AND PLUG-INS BOOK
MSRP. \$34.99; WWW.COURSEPTR.COM

The S.M.A.R.T. Guide to Digital Recording, Software and Plug-Ins is one of those reference books that pillages through the past, present, and future of digital music production, but stays focused enough to guide recording scholars through a thorough set of troubleshooting tips. From defining and exploring physical principles of sound to expounding on every facet of software plug-ins, author Bill Gibson offers enriched insights into recording, editing, and mastering your machine. The text comes complete with a demonstration DVD and enough charts and diagrams to satisfy aspiring producers and tech geeks alike. It's dense, so novices looking for solace probably won't find it here. *Fred Miketa*



HANG THE VJ

DIGITAL STAGE MOTION DIVE .TOKYO PERFORMANCE PACKAGE VJ SOFTWARE/CONTROLLER
MSRP. \$575; WWW.EDIROL.COM

Most laptop VJs suffer from the same core problem as many of their music-oriented counterparts: mousing around behind a laptop simply doesn't make for a thrilling live performance. Enter longtime purveyor of VJ software, Digital Stage, which has teamed up with Edrol to release a USB controller for their **Motion Dive .Tokyo** VJ software. Along with the newest version of Motion Dive, the controller mimics the software interface with a fader, video scratch buttons, BPM sync, and knobs to control various effects and select clips on the fly. There's even V-Link integration for triggering clips via your MIDI keyboard or drum machine. An impressive video library rounds out the package, and while the interface still has its eccentricities, this is currently the best way to get physical with your visuals. *Evan Shamoon*



NICE CANS

ULTRASONES DJ1 PRO HEADPHONES
MSRP, \$239, WWW.ULTRASONES.COM

Sometimes it's the little things—extra adapters, two sets of coiled cords (one with two-channel volume control), stylish bag—that come with high-end headphones that make it for guys like me. Yeah, the **Ultrasones DJ1 Pros** come with all the accoutrements, but most importantly, their sound is unmatched. The Natural Surround Sound effect gives everything from sweeping minimal techno to Christian Marclay-esque electro-acoustic music the perfect spatial touch, and saves a ton of cumulative damage to the ears. Does the low end hold up? These 50mm Mylar drivers do more than enough to keep your Mobbs deep and your Reks heavy. For the price, you can't beat these cans. *Ken Taylor*



ON THE FAST TRACK

M-AUDIO FAST TRACK PRO AUDIO-MIDI INTERFACE
MSRP, \$299.95, WWW.M-AUDIO.COM

You can't just be satisfied with where electronic music is—you have to know where it's going to go next. Anticipating a future of laptop DJs and smaller, more powerful USB-dominated computers, the **M-Audio Fast Track Pro** combines the best features of its extensive mobile interface line in a compact, in/out-packed unit. Like its cousins MobilePre, Fast Track, and Audiofile USB, this paperback book-sized interface enables home or on-the-road recording from instruments or mics via its front-panel dual XLR/quarter-inch inputs. Plus, score one for laptop DJs: Fast Track Pro's double RCA outs allow simultaneous speaker and headphone monitoring—great for us non-cardbus/audiocard-enabled computer users. With my Apple iBook G4 and NI Traktor, the FTP made a smooth, all-MP3 DJ session effortless. Get a step ahead with this solid box. *Tomas Palermo*



SPEED OF SOUND

SONAR 5 PRODUCER EDITION PRODUCTION SOFTWARE
MSRP, \$799.99, WWW.CAKEWALK.COM

In terms of PC DAWs, Cakewalk's **Sonar** has always been somewhat of an underdog. Yet Sonar can do everything the others can do without dedicated hardware or annoying dongles, so why the second-class treatment? Truly excellent bundled plug-ins like the PerfectSpace Convolution reverb and Roland's V-Vocal hardly help clear up the confusion; nor does the rock-solid MIDI timing and clean interface. While competitors like Cubase may have made better strides towards integrating hardware into the fray—while adding a lengthy list of features—Sonar's understated simplicity makes the competition look bloated in comparison. *Brandon Ivers*



MOD YOUR POD

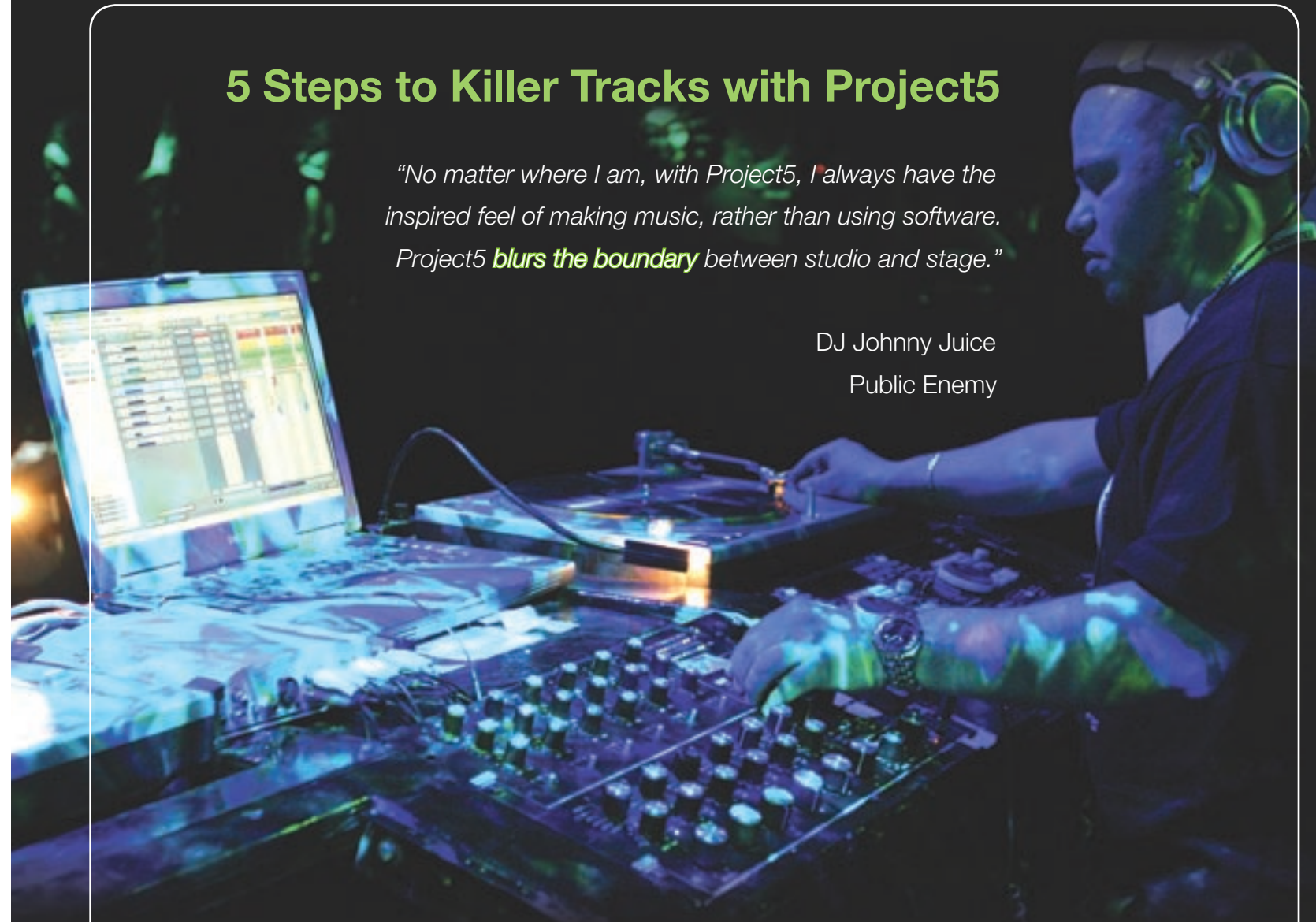
HARMAN KARDON DRIVE + PLAY AUTO IPOD ADAPTER
MSRP, \$199.95, WWW.DRIVEANDPLAY.COM

Despite the fact that iPods are simply everywhere these days, it's still taking a while for car manufacturers to get hip to the little white marvel. In fact, only a handful of them actually come equipped with MP3-player docks. The universal solution? A handy little setup that adapts the main control and screen features of the iPod (Nano, too) to suit the interior of a car. It's not "drive and play"-friendly right off the bat; the system still requires professional installation (compatible with any vehicle). But once the pivoting backlit screen is mounted on your dash, the dock unit tucked neatly under the seat, and the clickwheel-emulating control placed anywhere you like, navigating your playlists is as breezy as the wind in your hair. *Ken Taylor*

5 Steps to Killer Tracks with Project5

"No matter where I am, with Project5, I always have the inspired feel of making music, rather than using software. Project5 *blurs the boundary* between studio and stage."

DJ Johnny Juice
Public Enemy



- 1. PATCH** - Create and perform with included instruments like Dimension, Rewire clients like Reason, any DXi or VSTi, or record your own audio.
- 2. TWEAK** - Track inspector gives you immediate access to every aspect of your sound: Instrument, effect, arpeggiator, settings, routing & control parameters.
- 3. BUILD** - Edit patterns, loops, and automation in realtime, then send them to the GrooveMatrix or Arrange pane.
- 4. PERFORM** - Use the integrated GrooveMatrix to trigger individual loops, one shots, and MIDI patterns, or sets of loops and patterns. Great for performing or arranging.
- 5. ARRANGE** - the intuitive arrange pane allows for fast on-the-fly sequencing and editing of songs.

project5

Download the demo and watch the videos at www.project5.com.

cakewalk



PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AWESOME

PALM TX PDA
MSRP: \$299, WWW.PALM.COM

While that nerd in the club holds it down like Mr. Spock with his blue LED Jabra cell-phone earpiece (truly the "brick phone" of this generation), I choose to get mega-media incognito with the superb **Palm TX**. More than just a contact-storage device, the TX is a color PDA that comes Bluetooth and Wi-Fi enabled. See, you really don't need a bulky, expensive Treo—check your email in the airport, listen to some downloaded MP3s, and then watch a video on the TX's high-resolution 320x480 color screen. The thin, five-ounce, brushed-metal TX offers 128MB of memory, a free 30-day subscription to all T-Mobile Wi-Fi hotspots, and File Access to view documents from home or work desktops. I won't bore you with crap about how I wirelessly emailed a photo, wrote a love letter in Word, or checked the Warriors score on ESPN.com, but my look is a helluva lot sharper than Mr. or Mrs. Techno-ears'. *Tomas Palermo*



LOUNGING AROUND

APPLIED ACOUSTICS LOUNGE LIZARD EP-3 ELECTRIC PIANO SOFTWARE

MSRP: \$249, WWW.APPLIED-ACOUSTICS.COM

While there are tons of Rhodes and Wuritzer wannabes floating around as VST/DXi plug-ins, most of them end up sounding more like toy pianos than the classic electric pianos they're trying to emulate.

Applied Acoustics Lounge Lizard is one glowing exception, and it sounds as close to the real thing as you're likely to get in the virtual world. Offering more modulation options than your average synth, the Lounge Lizard's breadth is matched only by its sound. Smooth top-end with just enough grit—this is the sort of plug-in that gives software a good name. *Brandon Ivers*



REVEL IN REVELIE

ARTURIA BRASS SOFTWARE
MSRP: \$349, WWW.ARTURIA.COM

Based upon five years of exhaustive research, Arturia's **Brass** synth stands as one of the best virtual-modeling plug-ins on the market today. In addition to accurately reproducing trumpet, saxophone, and trombone sounds, Brass provides a bevy of interesting options that allow one to really express his or her creativity. Take, for example, the spatialization feature, wherein one can change the horn's position within a virtual room and alter the shape of the room itself. Using another option, one can change the material of the mouthpiece, the make of the horn, and the metal that it's made of. And with the humanization settings, one can actually affect the ability of the person blowing the horn, ranging from a perfect (and rather synth-y sounding) computer to a sloppy (but thoroughly human) "beginner" setting. With all this to work from, you can be certain that Brass will achieve excellent results with a minimum of work, regardless of your skill level. *Alexander Posell*



BEAT CONNECTION

PERIMETER SOUND ARTS BIO-MECHANIC BEATS AUDIO LOOPS
MSRP: \$24.99, WWW.PERIMETERSOUND.COM

Producers Jeff Rhodes and Todd Milne compose beat, bass, and percussion loops that display a startling range—from delicate, processed hi-hat patterns to thundering saw-tooth basslines to funky kit beats. Each loop is like a little composition with its own distinct character—perhaps too much for a loop collection. The fragments of sound on their **Bio-Mechanic Beats** CD, as with most of their Perimeter Sound Arts collections, leave little room for the consumers' exploration. To their credit, Bio-Mechanic Beats takes some time to sift through—not because it lacks cool sounds, but because few make for clean, raw materials. *Marc Kate*



VIS-ED: BWANA SPOONS

Zines, skateboarding, and other doo-doo from a Portland-based tapir lover.

WORDS: JOSIAH HUGHES IMAGES: BWANA SPOONS



Like some bizarre, forest-dwelling cartoon character, Bwana Spoons exists in a world of his own. No matter what medium, the playful surrealism of Spoons' work is marked by sincere abandon and a love of exploration. Born in LA, Bwana Spoons moved to Michigan when he was three. A few years later, he failed the first grade and his family moved back to California. Spending most of his time alone, he found solace in zany Hanna-Barbera cartoons like *Underdog* and *Wacky Races* and in the pages of *MAD Magazine*. Finding art-making a good way to meet people, he first got into zine culture in 1992 and went on to publish notable rags like *Ain't Nothin' Like Fuckin' Moonshine* and *Pencil Fight*. This quickly led to illustration

work for the likes of Nike 6.0, Hewlett-Packard, Nickelodeon, Top Shelf, Dogtown, Hessenmob, Buster Design, and Vans.

Today, the Portland-based artist is immersed in many different projects. Avidly involved with zine-making, painting, and more recently, toy-making, he still finds time to hang out with his wife of 13 years, Marny, and their daughter, nine-month-old Hazel Millie Spoons. When he's not boasting about his Lego collection (which exceeds 200 lbs) or his love for tapirs, Spoons embraces modern zine culture and moody metal. All this from a man who vows he "didn't go to no fancy art school."

www.grasshutch.com

ABOVE:
Moshi Moshi 1 & 2, 2004

RIGHT:
Exclusive piece for
XLR8R Vis-Ed





How did you first get into the work you do now?
I have always been drawing. I think making *Ain't Nothin' Like Fuckin' Moonshine* made me lots of art friends. I started getting asked to be in shows, and so I learned how to paint. These days, all I do is draw and paint, and sometimes sculpt or make comics and zines.

What artists inspired you as you found your own style?
After I graduated high school, I moved to San Francisco in '89. I met loads of rad artists at that time who were also getting their footing. My friend Jimbo and I would make Super 8 films and draw goofy characters. I would skate and hang out with broham Chris Johanson. It seemed that everybody was making art or playing music, and everywhere I looked there was rad shit on the walls. Dripping screws and giant horses.

Do you paint to convey a theme or direct message, or is it driven more by improvisation and intuition?
My works always come from inside my guts, so there is always something floating below the surface. I do both because I have two ways in which I paint. The first is a roughly penciled piece that I usually work

out through a thumbnail and then map out. The second is putting down blobs and shapes in paint, and then I see what is coming to the surface, just pulling doo-doo out of my ass through layers until I get something that I really like.

Do you feel that your art is autobiographical?
My art is more a fantasy of the world I want to live in, rather than any type of direct take on what my life is now. Now if I lived in a banyan tree and rowed my canoe over to the mainland everyday to get a banana shake—that would be auto-bio.

How do you feel about the internet's takeover of zine culture as the majority of zines move to the online format?
It doesn't really bother me too much. I made lots of great friends pre-internet through trading zines and writing letters. Now we just do it in a different way. I laugh when people say that print is dead. I think there is a gap between indie magazines like *XLR8R* and the little mini-comic, but other than that, the print culture is effin' great. If anything, it has pushed people that do print to make their shit better. You can't just crap out a 60-page Xerox that you made in an hour and expect folks to dig it. Now everybody is using Gocco, silkscreening,

letterpressing, and hand-binding. There is such an eye for craft, and everything looks so good.

Do you skateboard? Do you feel any connection to skate culture?
I still skate about once a month, when I feel the inspiration and have the time both at the same moment. All the cement parks here in Oregon are so effin' nice. I grew up with skaters, and skate art was a lot of my early influence. Neil Blender and Mark Gonzales are definitely early influences, and I flipped out when I got to be in an art show with Blender and met him some years back. I used to do boards for Dogtown back in the early '90s. Those graphics really sucked ass, but I loved that I got to do them. Now I do some for Hessenmob, and maybe a board for Krooked soon.

Do you have any moral qualms with using your art to advertise a product?
Not if I like the product. You definitely won't see

my interpretation of the new H4 crawling over the earth, or one of my characters smoking a Camel Light. But if I like the product then it's fine. I love that Gary [Baseman] does all the Cranium art, and that [Lloyd] Dangle has his work on [that Airborne stuff]. When Charles Burns did the Levi's ads that was rad, too.

What styles of music are you into? Does music play a role in your artistic process?
With music, I am all over the board. It just has to be effin' rad. I love Prefuse 73, Juana Molina, Brazilian Girls, Blackalicious, Dudley Perkins, St. Tropez, Slint, Pretenders, The Clash, Spoon, AC Newman. I love good, moody metal too: Mastodon, The Melvins, Pelican, and my all-time favorite, Neurosis, who somehow keep getting better and better. The silly thing is that the more deep and oppressive it gets, the happier I feel when I listen. Lately, I have been listening to rainforest sounds for painting.

OPPOSITE PAGE (FROM BOTTOM LEFT):
Various hand-screened zines, 2001-2005
Clue Number 5 Cave Vegan, 2005
Let's Play Some Music, 2004

THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):
Steven the Bat glow-in-the-dark figurine, 2005
Good Morning t-shirt design for Stems, 2004
Globby, 2005
Hair Party #1-4, 2005
To the Rescue, 2005



Can (clockwise from left): Jaki Liebeck, Holger Czukay, Michael Karoli, and Irmin Schmidt

CAN'S IRMIN SCHMIDT

THE FOUNDING FATHER OF KRAUTROCK REMAKES, REMODELS, AND REISSUES

WORDS: KEN TAYLOR

At a time when Germany was literally rebuilding itself from the ground up, artists in Cologne (both visual and musical) flourished, giving birth to a new post-war culture. In fact, the revolution was in full swing from San Francisco to Europe. While students rioted on campuses around the globe, experimental electronic music spread boundlessly in cities everywhere. A pupil of composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, pianist Irmin Schmidt was at the eye of the storm, channeling all manner of sounds and politics, and assembling what would become the band most synonymous with the Krautrock sound: Can.

From his residence near Avignon, France, Schmidt is still susceptible to the whims of electronic technology. Our telephone conversation is briefly interrupted as the cycles of nuclear power shipped out to his countryside home encounter a delay and cut the phone line temporarily. In keeping

with Schmidt's Cagean philosophy, it turns out that our interview, too, is subject to the indeterminacy of its environment.

Set the scene for us in Cologne in 1968.

Cologne was a very lively place at that time. It was the center of electronic music in Germany: Stockhausen had founded his electronic music studio in the radio station WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk); the orchestras all performed works by Stockhausen and Boulez; and there was also quite a lively jazz scene. In fact, [Can's] Jaki Liebeck was the drummer in a jazz orchestra when we found him.

How about politically? What was going on?

Lots of things happened politically. I was not very active in politics, though. My main action was quitting classical conducting and composing, and founding a rock group, which

was, in a way, also a political statement. For a classical musician with a decent career as a pianist, conductor, and composer, [to throw] that away to found a totally crazy group seemed a fairly insane act of waste.

So why did you do it?

I was rather unsatisfied with the state of contemporary music at that time in this circle...because it was very dogmatic. It claimed to be the *only* way to be contemporary, to be *new*. On the other hand, I thought of 'new' in terms of Western culture, comparing what Western jazz artists did to re-contextualize boring instruments like the saxophone with what Stockhausen was doing. [Jazz] was at least as new a cultural phenomenon as Stockhausen was for me.

So what did you think of electronic music when you first heard it and brought it into Can's sound?

In the beginning, I hated synthesizers. I found them quite boring, so I invented my own. What was very important was that I wanted to create electronic sounds spontaneously on the stage without long preparations.

Was this always thought of as a problem with electronic instrumentation, that there was too much programming or not enough human emotion involved?

I don't ever think that electronic music should replace our rich instrumental possibilities. It's most interesting when the two are combined with each other... I don't really understand the argument of human or inhuman. When people have a drum machine and try to make it a little bit imperfect to sound human, I find that quite strange. All electronic instruments are human creations, so what's inhuman about it?

When you went through the process of re-mastering these discs for reissue, what was your main goal?

We wanted to go back to the originals because the existing CDs, which were mastered in the '80s, were always too contaminated by this euphoric belief in the new early '80s technology. There were all kinds of effects, which one thought could improve the sound. Actually, what happened was that it got worse...

We very carefully de-noised [the original tapes], so that nothing of the sound was changed. We loved that the environment was part of the music. We left the windows open. If somebody came in and started talking, we still recorded. It was a very Cagean idea. And when we put it on CD, like the original tape sounded, we came to realize that what we really wanted now actually sounds very modern.

Can DVD, Delay, Flow Motion, Saw Delight, Can, and Rite Time reissues are out this spring.

www.mute.com, www.spoonrecords.com

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和
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Some good style is so hot it can easily be use to heat up delicious soup.



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